

# FY 2016

## TXFWCO Activity Report: February



## Removal of Ottine Dam

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

# Texas Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (TXFWCO)

## Monthly Report

### Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Activities

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## *Big Cypress Community Meeting*

On 2-3 February 2016, Mike Montagne attended a community meeting for the Big Cypress Watershed in Uncertain, TX. The meeting coincided with World Wetland Day and many local groups attended. Mike spoke to the group about phase two of the Paddlefish Reintroduction Project and that the watershed had been selected as a priority watershed for the East Texas and Oklahoma Emphasis Area. The community is very involved in this area and are very receptive to working with us to improve the health of the watershed.

## *Ottine Dam Replanting*

The demolition of Ottine dam was completed in January of 2016. On 9-10 February 2016, The TXFWCO, The San Marcos Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center (SMARC), and volunteers, completed the re-vegetation of the disturbed areas with native plants and trees to stabilize the banks and discourage invasive species from colonizing the areas.



Over 20 volunteers came out to revegetate the area that was disturbed by the removal of the dam.

## ***Kent County Brazos River Crossing***

On 23 March 2016, Mike Montagne and Diego Araujo conducted a site visit to a potential fish passage project on the South Mountain Fork of the Brazos River in Kent County TX. The river crossing is used by the oil and gas industry to access local wells in the area. The river is Critical Habitat for the endangered sharpnose shiner (*Notropis oxyrhynchus*) and smalleye shiner (*Notropis buccula*).



**Road crossing with perched culverts on the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos River.**

## ***Baseline Assessment of Dolan Creek and the Devils River***

On 8-12 February 2016, the TXFWCO, with help from the SMARC, and TPWD, began sampling at Dolan Creek and the Devils River for riffle beetles and other aquatic invertebrates. Thirty three lures were deployed for the collection of riffle beetles,

specifically *Heterelmis* sp. Invertebrate samples were collected from Devils River, Dolan Creek, and springs along Dolan Creek, Finnegan Springs, and Blue Hole. Samples are currently being sorted and identified back in the lab.



Riffle beetle lure deployed at Dolan Creek Springs.

## ***Salado Salamander***

Salado salamander monitoring continued at Robertson springs following the removal of a logjam at the end of the spring run. Eleven weeks after the removal, the silt composition has dropped from 92% to 50%, with more cobble and gravel to be exposed (Salado salamander preferred substrate). Other positive effects of the removal include the drop in water level in the spring run, creating an elevation gradient from the spring orifice and the spring run, that precludes large bodied predators such as bass. Over the last three sampling events, seven salamanders have been collected (four adults and three larvae)

from Roberson springs. All captured salamanders have been photographed to track individuals, and tail clips collected for future population genetics work.



Uncovered springs at the Robertson Springs site, and two of the salamanders found there.

## *Outreach*

Chris Chapa has been meeting with Texas Sea Grant Extension agent Bill Balboa about the construction of an educational oyster reef in Palacios, Texas. Working with the Palacios Seawall Commission, they are looking to complement the construction of the Palacios Coastal Education Pavilion, and the Texas State Marine Education Center, an educational facility associated with the Matagorda County Navigation District No.1 and Palacios Independent School District, which provides supportive marine based education to students and teachers through hands-on activities. Upon delivery this education reef will accomplish three primary goals: 1) demonstrate to and educate the public of the ecological importance of oyster reefs, 2) development of educational outreach programs, and 3) foster community involvement and ownership through the establishment of an oyster gardening program. The proposed educational reef site is within the confines of the South Bay Boat Ramp located in Palacios, on the north shoreline of Tres Palacios Bay adjacent to the above mentioned Palacios Coastal Education Center.



**Proposed location of education oyster reef within the confines of the South Bay Boat Ramp Embayment.**

## ***March Schedule of Activities:***

2-4 March 2016: Fish Community Work at Camp Maxey

7-11 March 2016: TNC Dolan Springs Aquatic Community Assessment

22-24 March 2016: Pecos Pupfish Monitoring

28-29 March 2016: Salado Salamander Monitoring