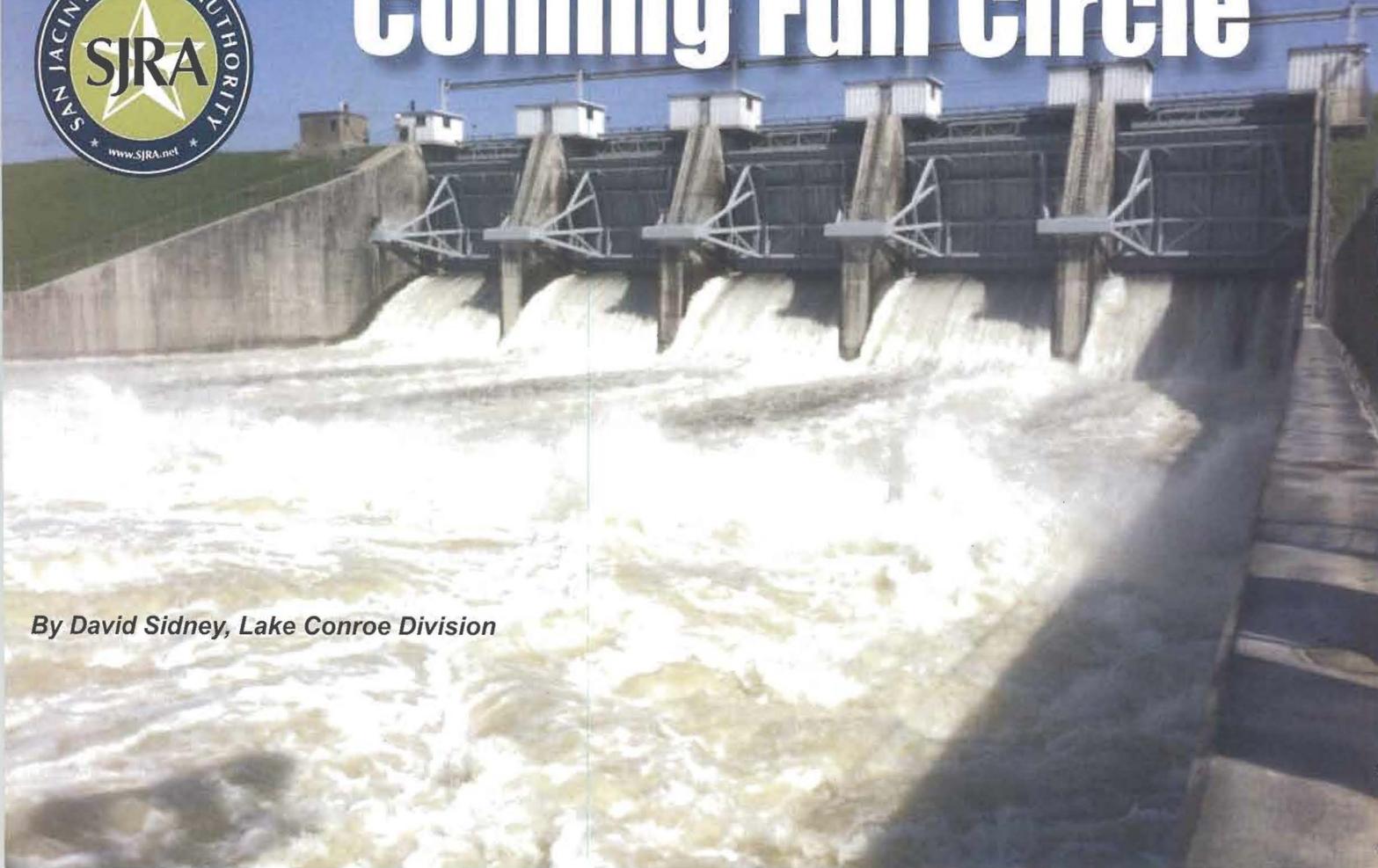




Coming Full Circle



By David Sidney, Lake Conroe Division

As I sit on top of the Lake Conroe Dam, looking out over a full lake, it is hard to believe we have recovered from the worst one year drought in Texas history. Looking back, in 2011 the Lake Conroe Dam received a mere 24.6 inches of total rainfall for the entire year. Adding insult to injury, we experienced record high evaporation totals of 81.3 inches due to such high temperatures, the City of Houston called on their 2/3 water rights, and in turn in the peak of the drought we receded to a record low lake level of 192.68 feet above mean sea level. Prior to 2011, Lake Conroe had never seen a level lower than 196.02 (which was on January 12, 1989).

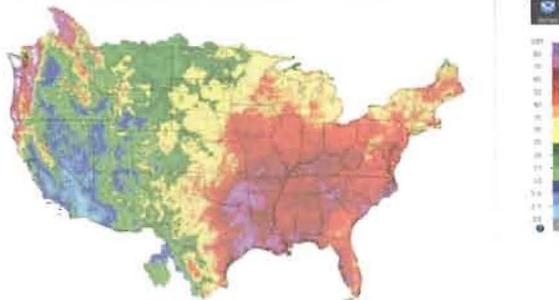
Coming full circle, 2015 and 2016 were two of the wettest years in recorded Texas history. In 2015, we recorded a total of 59.4 inches of

rainfall at the Dam. Response to these record rainfall amounts induces rising lake levels, which then trigger releases from the Lake Conroe Dam. At our max release on May 27, 2015 we were releasing a total of 8,660 cubic feet per second and reached a peak lake level of 202.51 feet above mean sea level. In total we released over 20 feet of lake level in 2015.

This trend of wet weather continued on into 2016 with a total rainfall amount of 72.9 inches. When compared with the 24.6 inch rainfall total for 2011, 2016 seemed like a monsoon. At our maximum release on May 28, 2016 we were releasing a total of 22,430 cubic feet per second and reached a peak lake level of 204.51 feet above mean sea level. Just like 2015, we released over 20 feet of lake level in total for the year.

2015 Rainfall Totals

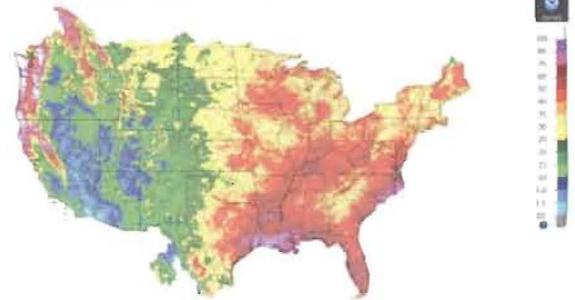
January 01, 2015 Annual Observed Precipitation
Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 Date: January 01, 2015 00:00:00



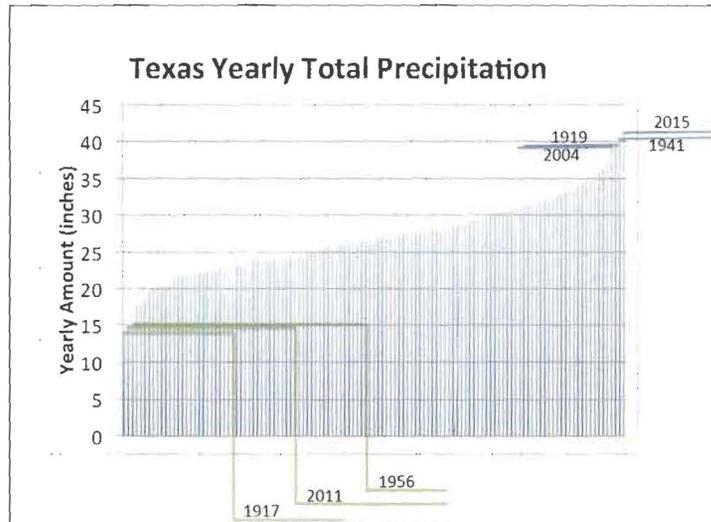
<http://water.weather.gov/precip/>

2016 Rainfall Totals

January 01, 2016 Annual Observed Precipitation
Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 Date: January 01, 2016 00:00:00



<http://water.weather.gov/precip/>



For comparison, the record high release occurred in 1994, with a maximum rate of 33,000 cubic feet per second. During that event we reached a record high lake level of 205.6 feet above mean sea level.

Flowing into 2017, it seems that the wet cycle is still in full swing. Currently we are at full pool, which is 201.00 feet above mean sea level. If we continue the cycle we have been experiencing the past few years, you are likely to see consistent high lake levels throughout the spring season.

The old cliché of “what follows a drought is a flood” seems to be proving itself completely accurate.

For more information on rainfall totals and or lake level information, please visit our website at www.sjra.net/lakeconroe or give us a call at 936-588-1111. ♦