

Texas Bluebonnet Report

South and East of San Antonio

2016 Outlook

Provided by WildflowerHaven.com

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About this eBook

This 2016 Outlook of the area south and east of San Antonio provides a brief summary of the conditions for the 2016 Wildflower Season with a focus on the Texas Bluebonnet. It represents the collective experience of several professional and semi-professional photographers. However, this eBook is just a guide and does not guarantee that the reader will find displays of Texas Bluebonnets along any of the routes mentioned. It is hoped that the information shared here will encourage you, the reader, to safely and respectfully venture out to enjoy the wonder and beauty of our state flower and the many other wildflowers in Texas. For current reports on bluebonnet and other wildflower reports visit our forums at WildflowerHaven.com and our Facebook page – [Texas Wildflower Report](#). Also see the [Resources Page](#) at the end of the eBook for other sighting report sources.

When you do venture out to enjoy our Texas Bluebonnets and other wildflowers in bloom, please travel safely and be respectful of the private property of others. We **do not** encourage nor do we condone trespassing on private property to get that annual “kids in the bluebonnets” photo or any photo. The Texas Department of Public Safety provides some important [guidelines](#) on how to safely and legally enjoy viewing and photographing our Texas Wildflowers. You are strongly encouraged to read those guidelines before venturing out to explore.

If you find this guide to be helpful in your search for Texas Wildflowers, please like our [Texas Wildflower Report](#) Facebook page and share a copy of this guide with your friends. Also, we have a large selection of bluebonnet and wildflower images in our [Texas Wildflower Report Galleries](#). Prints or licenses to use are available for most of these images. WildflowerHaven.com is a for-profit organization, but we do attempt to provide these and many other sources of information without charge. If you would like to help fund our efforts consider purchasing a print or make a small donation via PayPal.

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<http://www.pbase.com/richo/bluebonnets>

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South and East of San Antonio Rainfall Analysis

A strong El Niño developed in September 2015, but the precipitation benefits from it were not realized until October and November. Strong “wobbles” of the Polar Vortex help to divert the normal west to east subtropical flow farther south of Texas. This left most of Texas experiencing below normal rainfall and above normal temperatures during January and February.

The fall rainfall for this region was generally above normal with some areas receiving well above normal rainfall. The January and February rainfall was at or above normal for most of the area. The 30 Day and 60 Day departure from normal rainfall as of 3/20/2016, shows most of the area well above normal rainfall. However, the region also experienced above normal temperatures in January and February. This has resulted in some early blooms and possibly negatively impacted the development of sandyland bluebonnets. More areas of Texas paintbrush have been reported than bluebonnets this year. The paintbrush is semi-parasitic and can tap into grass to help give it an early advantage over the bluebonnets.

Summary: The rainfall factor for both fall and winter favors the entire area, but the above normal temperatures seem to have benefitted the Texas paintbrush more than the sandyland bluebonnets. Only a few bluebonnet fields have been discovered as of 3/20/2016.

Bloom Peak: The best area reported so far has been west of Poteet and north of Texas 123 and should peak close to Easter weekend. The areas between I-37 and I-10 are not in full bloom as of 3/20/2016, but a few spots along roads that have been reported are probably at or beyond full bloom.

****Note**:** I toured the areas between Lytle, Devine, Poteet and Somerset on 3/21/2016. I checked 6 to 8 fields that have had good coverage of bluebonnets in the past and they are were virtually bare. The only field of bluebonnets with decent coverage was along FM-2504 half way between Texas 173 and FM-476. There were other wildflowers, but Texas paintbrush seems to be the main wildflower covering fields this season. If you are looking for some out of the way roads to pull over and take close-up or small scene photos then there are plenty of those opportunities.

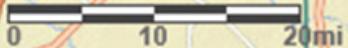
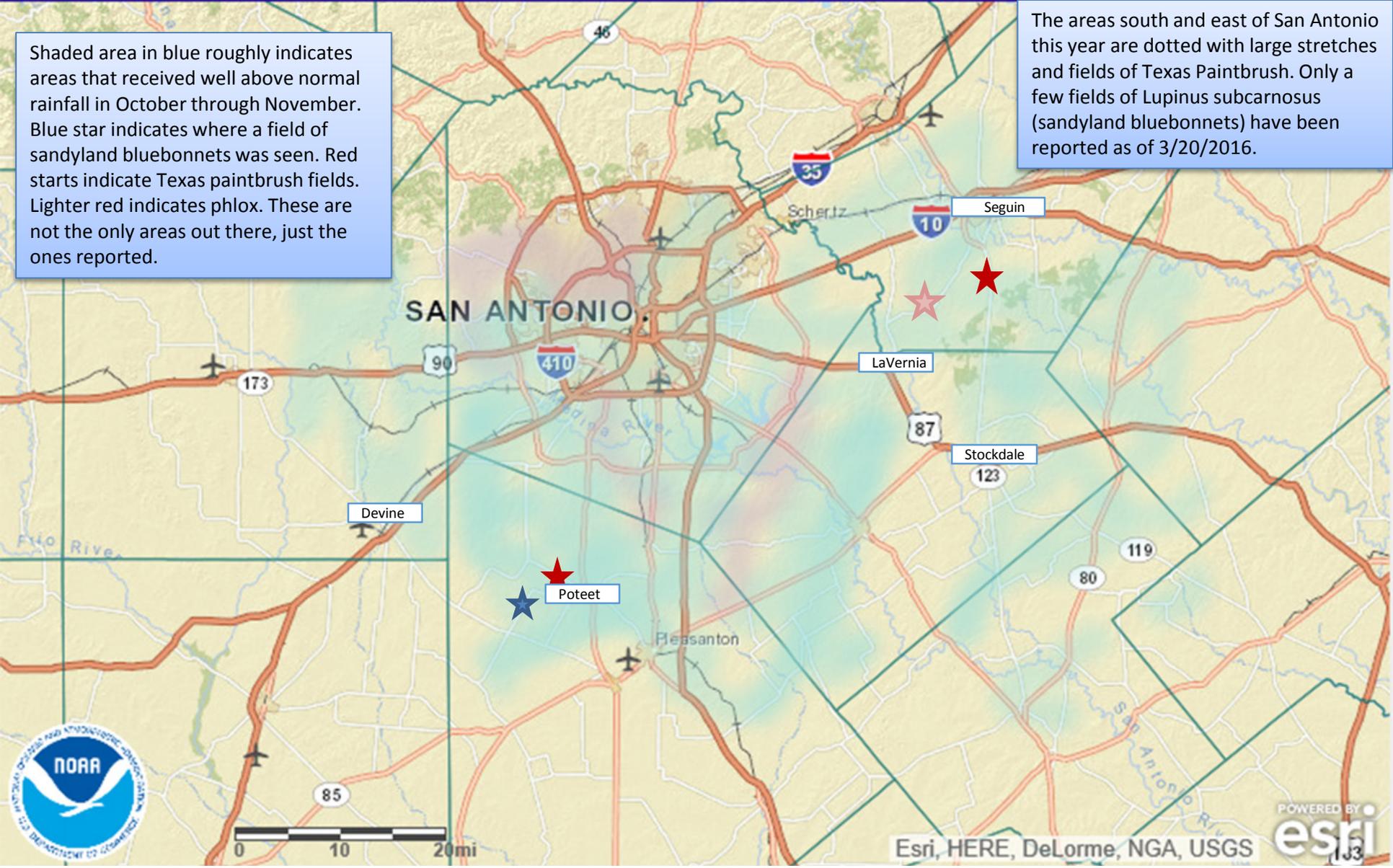
Rainfall is not the only factor!

It is important to understand that although rainfall is very important, rainfall is only one factor that leads to an above average wildflower show in the spring. Some other factors for a great spring wildflower show include:

- **Late winter and early spring rainfall** is very key to rosette root and plant growth. Usually the rosettes with deeper and better developed root systems are the ones that yield larger plants with more blooms.
- **Warming temps** in March are needed to encourage growth of plants and bloom stalks. Usually when the night-time temperatures are averaging 50 to 60 F, bluebonnet plants will increase plant growth and send out bloom stalks. Cooler temperatures in March will tend to delay the blooming period. Warm temperatures with good rainfall will tend to promote an early and longer season. Extreme heat in late March and April with less than average rainfall will promote a quick and shorten season.
- **Plenty of sunshine** during the typical flowering time is important especially for sun hungry bluebonnets. Long periods of overcast skies with warm/damp weather can encourage development of plant and root diseases. I have seen entire bluebonnet crops wiped out by root diseases.
- **Less competing vegetation** - Dead vegetation from previous seasons not removed can result in excessive shading thus limiting rosette and seedling development. Often aggressive invasive species will use this tactic to push out native wildflowers. In recent years the giant common mustard([Rapistrum rugosum](#)) has taken over entire pastures resulting in little or no native wildflower growth.
- **Proper mowing/grazing** - Grass mowed/grazed in late August and again in late January (but not too low to remove seedling rosettes) will help in removing/reducing dead/competing vegetation. Roadside mowing during the prime blooming months of Mar-May can literally kill a good wildflower display. Also, pasture lands overgrazed by livestock will often be completely barren of any wildflowers. This is particularly true of pastures grazed by goats and sheep. Deer usually do not choose native wildflowers as a food source, but where there is overcrowding and fewer food sources they will munch on native plant seedlings.

Shaded area in blue roughly indicates areas that received well above normal rainfall in October through November. Blue star indicates where a field of sandyland bluebonnets was seen. Red stars indicate Texas paintbrush fields. Lighter red indicates phlox. These are not the only areas out there, just the ones reported.

The areas south and east of San Antonio this year are dotted with large stretches and fields of Texas Paintbrush. Only a few fields of *Lupinus subcarnosus* (sandyland bluebonnets) have been reported as of 3/20/2016.



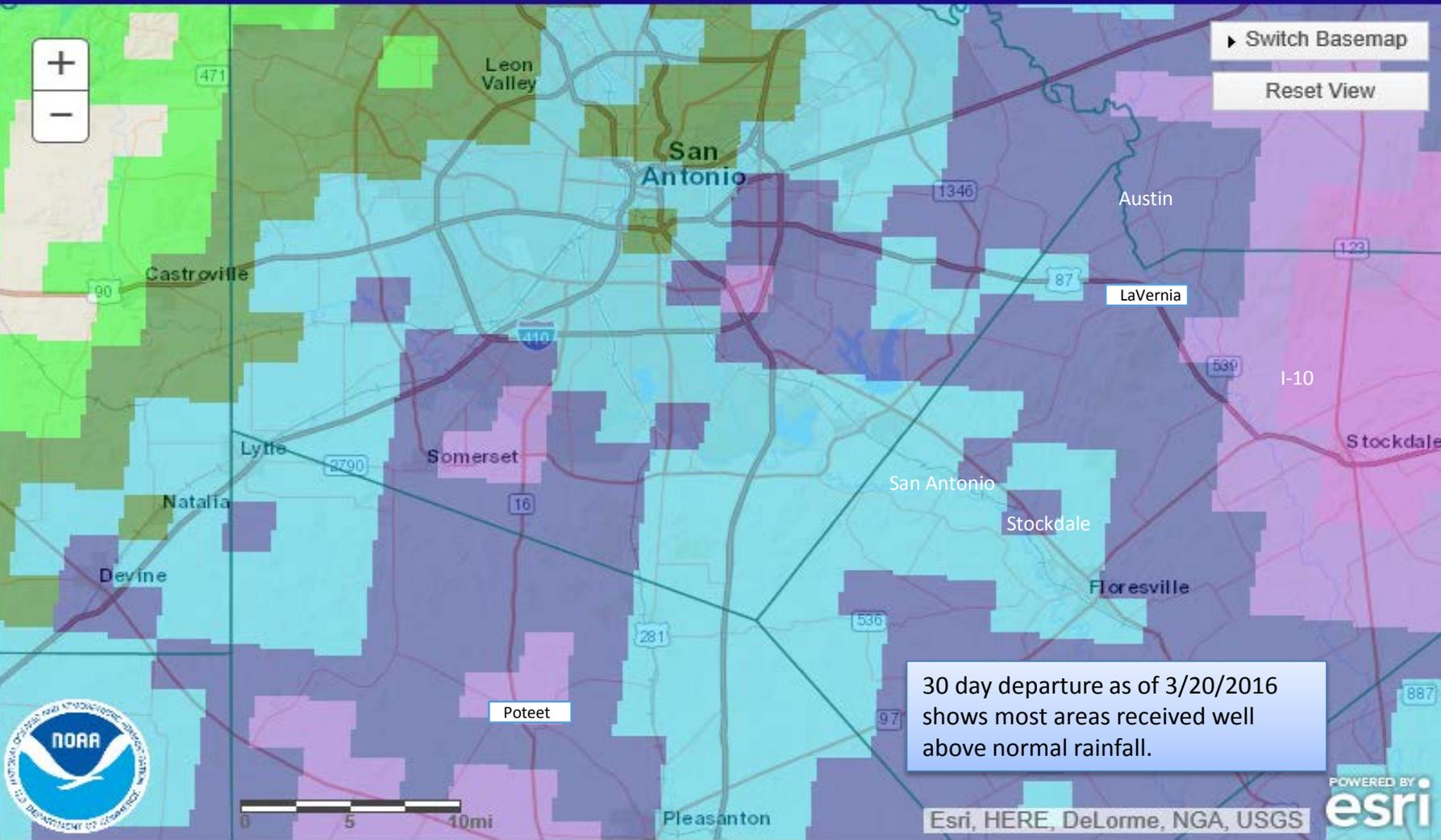
Esri, HERE, DeLorme, NGA, USGS



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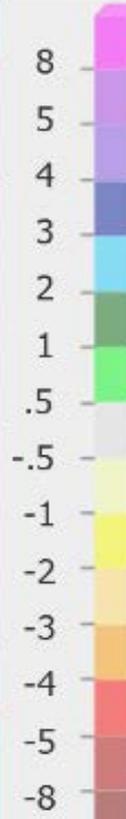
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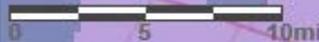


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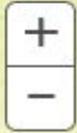
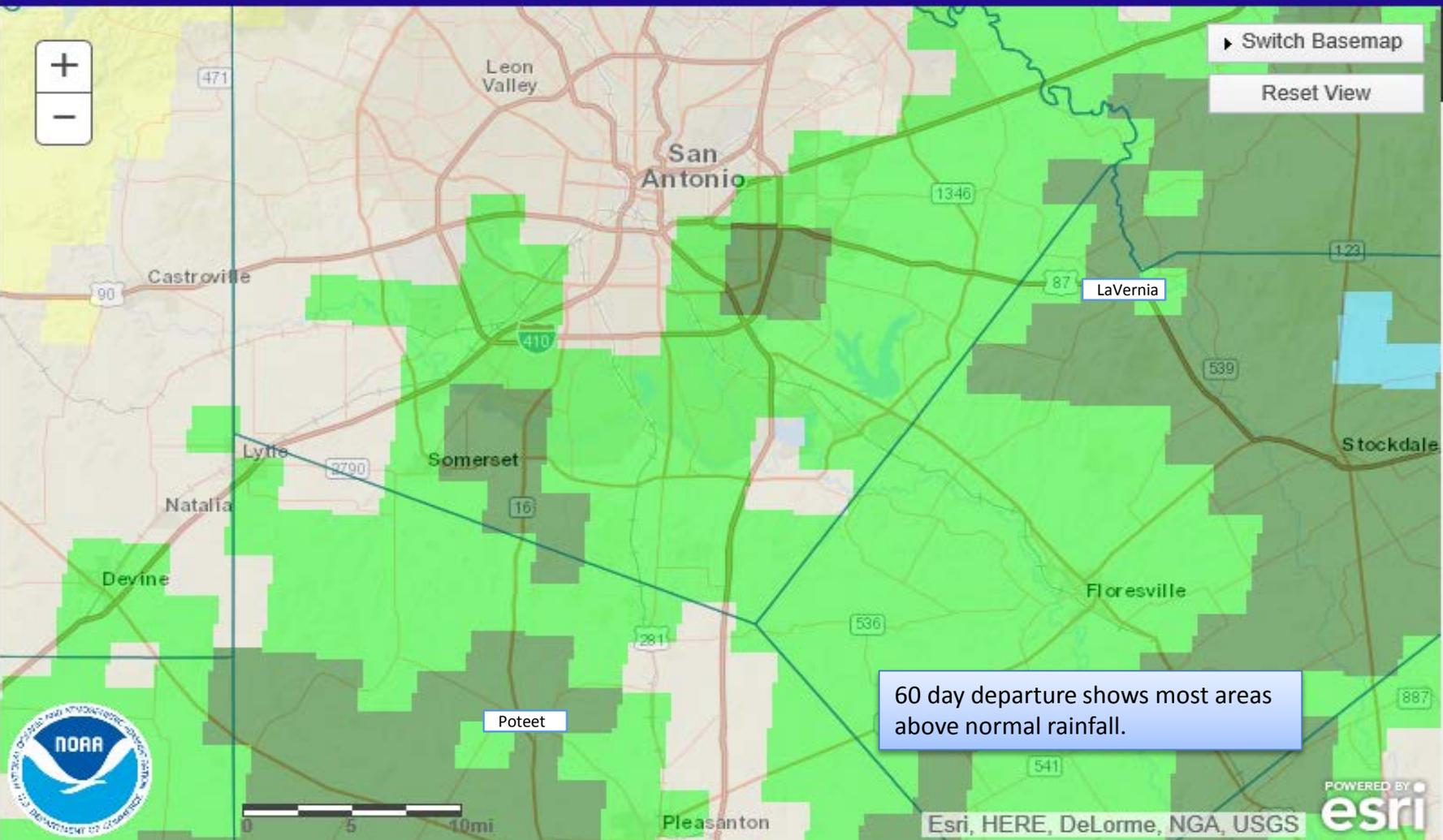


30 day departure as of 3/20/2016 shows most areas received well above normal rainfall.



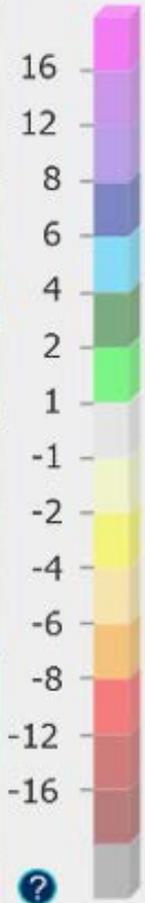
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60 day departure shows most areas above normal rainfall.



Routes

Current best routes as of 3/20/2016 are located west of Poteet and north of Texas 123. The following routes are currently reported as the top routes:

[FM-476 west of Poteet](#): - paintbrush field

[Mann RD west of Poteet](#): - large paintbrush field

[Eichman RD west of Poteet](#): - mixed wildflowers including some bluebonnets. One field with mixed wildflower and a windmill at Eichman RD and Ditto RD.

[FM-2504](#): - small field of bluebonnets.

[Texas 97/80 north of Nixon](#): Field of mixed wildflowers including some bluebonnets.

Lake Street, Lytle (Google Maps - <https://goo.gl/maps/vDXTpN6W91s>) : Field of Rose prickly poppy.

The routes listed below are some of the popular ones **from past seasons**. These are only a few of the possible routes. Several of the highways listed here are high traffic roadways and often with narrow or non-existent shoulders. Other routes are along county or farm-to-market roads which could be dirt/gravel roads with low water crossings. **Caution is advised** when traveling or stopping along any of these routes. The route maps provided here are only a guide, you should also have along either a standard printed road map or mapping software.

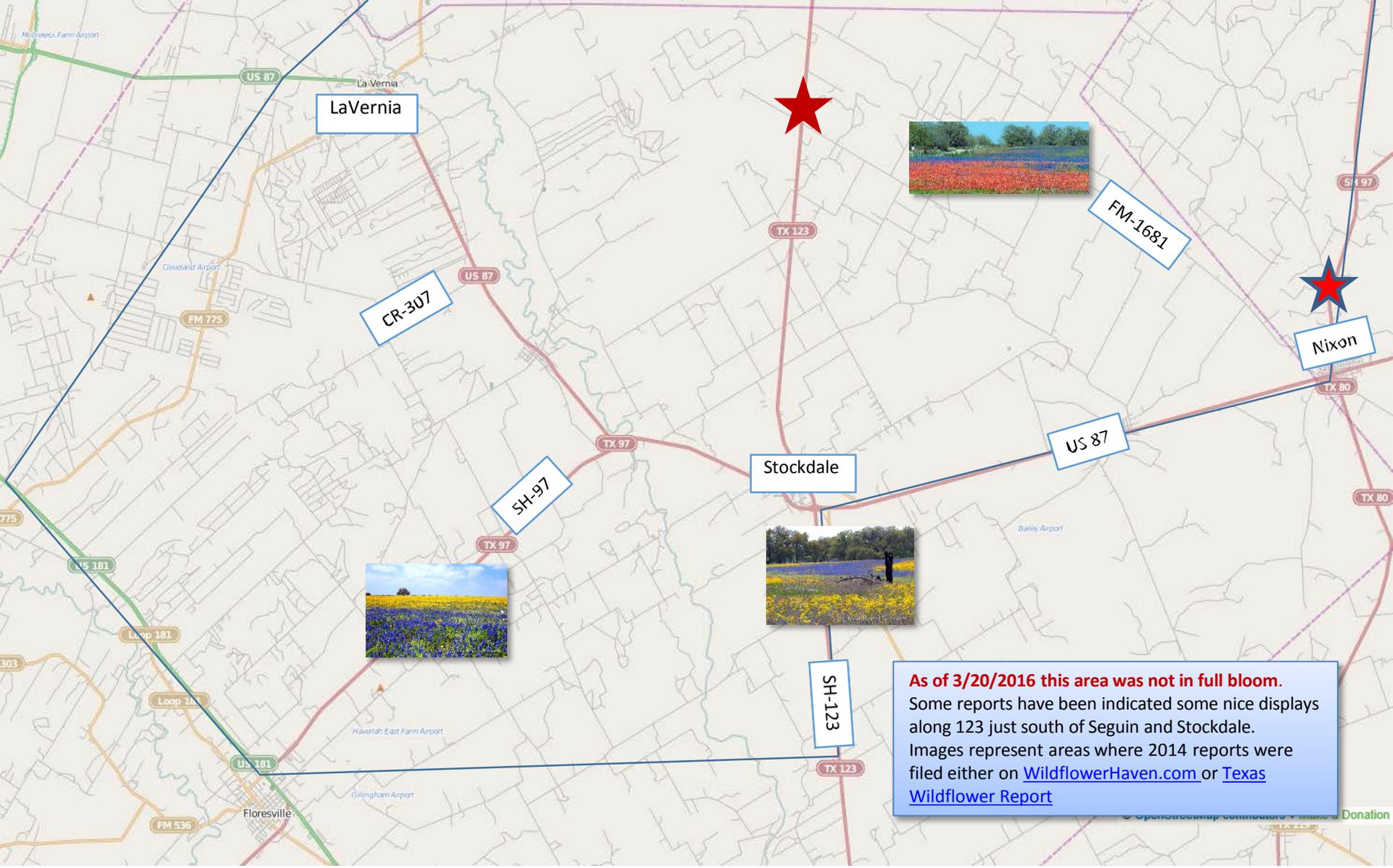
Texas-97 from Floresville to Stockdale: Several large fields of sandyland bluebonnets mixed with other wildflowers have been seen along this route in past years. Also large stretches of paintbrush and phlox have been noted.

Texas-123 south from Stockdale: At least one field of sandyland bluebonnets noted in the past along this route.

CR-307 west from US 87: Several nice bluebonnet fields along this route in previous seasons.

US-183 south from I-10: At least one large field of sandyland bluebonnets noted along this route in past seasons.

NOTE: As of 3/20/2016 the areas between I-37 and I-10 were not in full bloom or they are not developing well this year. There have been reports of phlox, paintbrush, some bluebonnets mixed with other wildflowers along Texas 123 south of Seguin and along



LaVernia

CR-307



FM-1681



Nixon

Stockdale

SH-97

US 87



SH-123

TX 123

As of 3/20/2016 this area was not in full bloom.
Some reports have been indicated some nice displays along 123 just south of Seguin and Stockdale. Images represent areas where 2014 reports were filed either on WildflowerHaven.com or [Texas Wildflower Report](http://TexasWildflowerReport)

New Berlin

FM-775

Single Oak RD

Church RD



As of 3/20/2016 this area was not in full bloom.

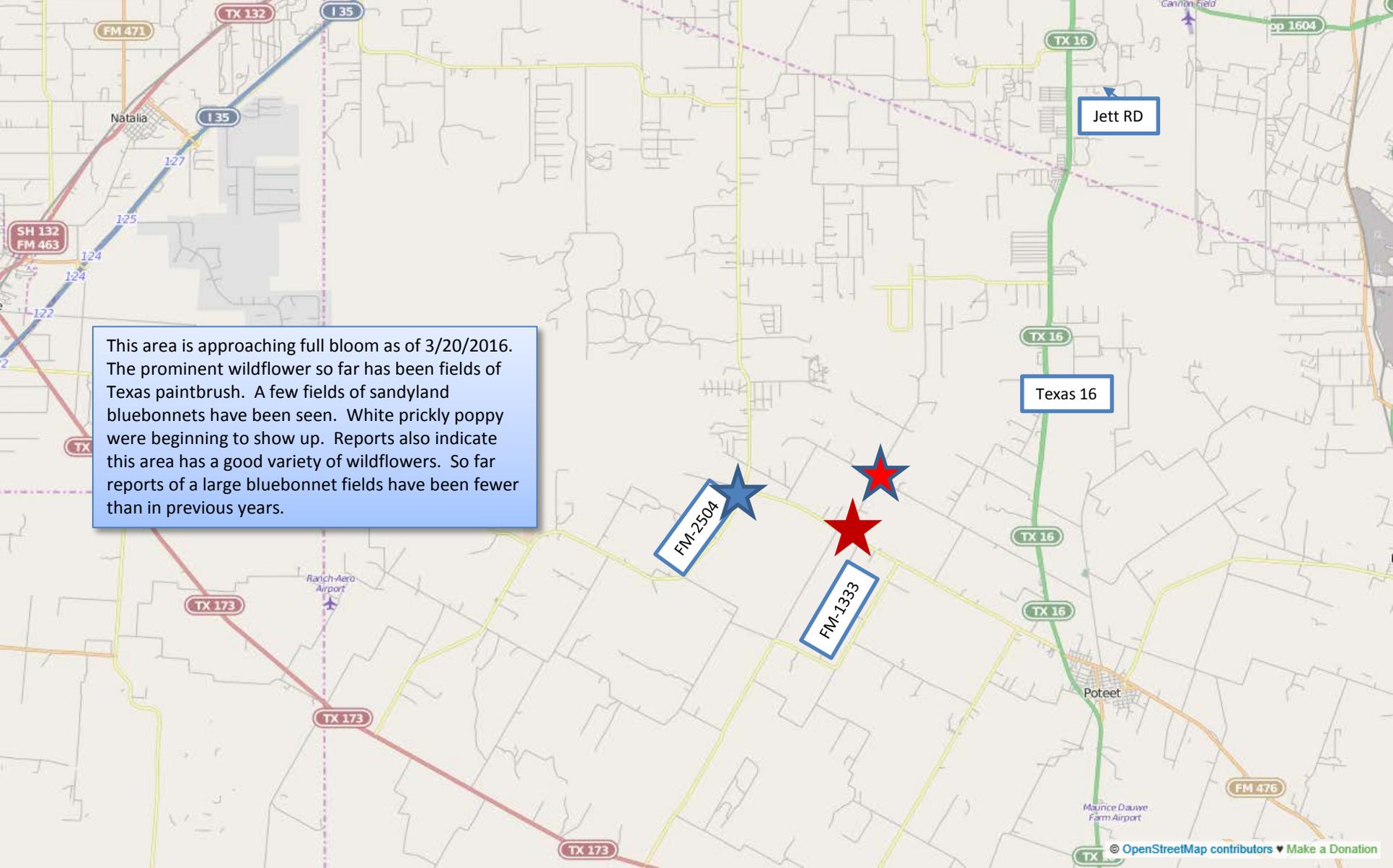
Current reports are not highly positive about this area compared to previous years.

Images represent areas where reports from past years were filed either on WildflowerHaven.com or Texas Wildflower Report



Christ Lutheran Church

This area is approaching full bloom as of 3/20/2016. The prominent wildflower so far has been fields of Texas paintbrush. A few fields of sandyland bluebonnets have been seen. White prickly poppy were beginning to show up. Reports also indicate this area has a good variety of wildflowers. So far reports of a large bluebonnet fields have been fewer than in previous years.



FM-2504

FM-1333

Jett RD

Texas 16

TX 173

TX 173

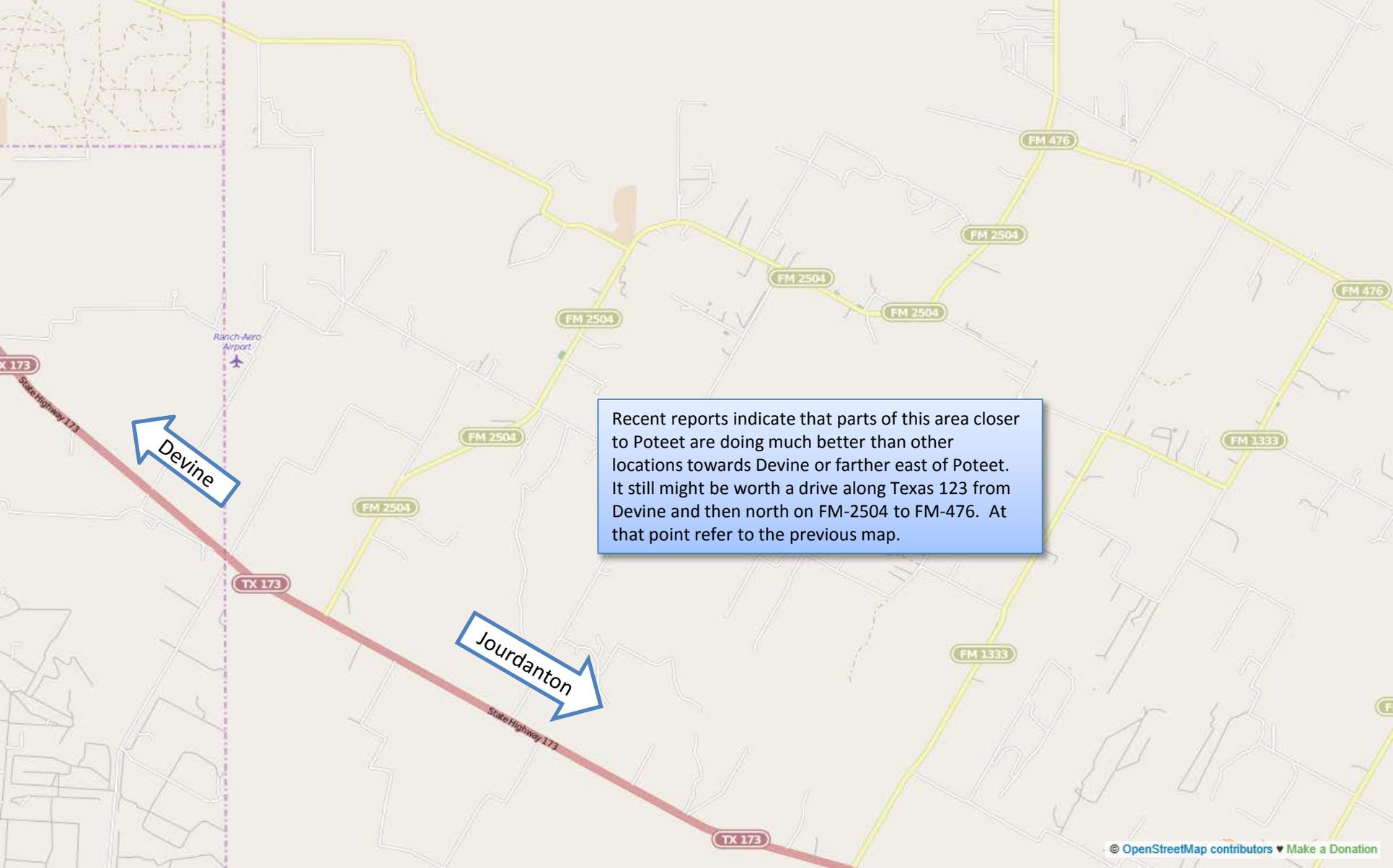
TX 16

TX 16

Poteet

FM 476

Maurice Dauwe Farm Airport



Ranch-Aero
Airport

Devine

Jourdanton

Recent reports indicate that parts of this area closer to Poteet are doing much better than other locations towards Devine or farther east of Poteet. It still might be worth a drive along Texas 123 from Devine and then north on FM-2504 to FM-476. At that point refer to the previous map.

References and Resources

Wildflower Reports

For bluebonnet and other wildflower reports check:

[WildflowerHaven Wildflower Reports](#)

[Texas Wildflower Report on Facebook](#)

[Other Wildflower Resources](#)

Special thanks to Johnny Boyd, [Texas Wildflower Photos](#), Mike Jones, and the many others on our Texas Wildflower Report Facebook page who submitted detailed scouting reports for the South Texas area.

[Wildflower Identification Resources](#)

Photographer Galleries

[Texas Wildflower Report](#) and [Texas Bluebonnet Photos](#) – Photos by the author, Rich Olivieri.

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