

The Geronimo Flow

May 2014



Your Newsletter

The Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership was formed in 2010 to restore and protect water quality in the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed due to elevated levels of bacteria and nitrate-nitrogen. The Partnership completed a Watershed Protection Plan in 2012 and is now working toward full

implementation. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform and engage local stakeholders in helping to improve and protect the quality of water in Geronimo and Alligator Creeks. For more information about the project visit our website:

www.geronimocreek.org

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Clean Up Event: It Just Keeps Getting Better

The Second Annual Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Clean Up event was a huge success and made a real impact by removing trash and debris from the creeks, as well as energizing and educating the community about these creeks. The event held Saturday, April 5, was coordinated by the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Partnership, Texas AgriLife Extension and the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority, as part of implementation efforts for the area's watershed protection plan. This year's event had more than double the number of volunteers compared to last year. Over 230 volunteers met at Parker Lumber in Seguin, the Navarro High School parking lot in Geronimo, and at the New Braunfels Airport at 9 a.m. for

breakfast tacos, safety briefings and clean up instructions. Event t-shirts, trash bags, gloves, pick-up tools, and other supplies were available to those who came out to help clean up the creeks. "The response from the community was even better than anything we could have hoped for!" said Debbie Magin, GBRA's Director of Water Quality Services. Both the Cities of Seguin and New Braunfels donated disposal services for trash collected during the event. Sponsors for the event included: the City of New Braunfels and the City of Seguin, Alamo Group, Continental Corporation, Geronimo Creek Retreat, Geronimo Lions Club, Guadalupe County Commissioner Seidenberger, Guadalupe-Blanco



The HEB employee team getting geared up to pick up trash.



The group from Texas Lutheran University did an excellent job, as usual.

River Authority, HEB, Liz Sedlacek, New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, Robin and Bill Walker, Seguin Daily News KWED, Seguin Gazette, Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

“Where last year’s event focused at 7 locations, this year we were able to cover a much larger area due to the larger number of volunteers—we sent crews to 22 locations where roadways crossed Geronimo and Alligator creeks and their contributing streams, and the large storm water detention pond behind the Town Center at Creekside,” said Ward Ling, Geronimo and

Alligator Creeks Watershed Coordinator with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. Volunteers collected 7,020 pounds of trash along 17 miles of roadway and creek banks, 45 tires, 2 cubic yards of scrap metal, large items such as lumber and debris, and two toilets,” said Ling. The City of New Braunfels will recycle the tires, and the metal materials collected were sent to recycling centers, as well. “We are so grateful for the overwhelming support from the community—we are planning to grow the number of partnerships with the community and make next year’s event even better!” said Ling.

New SWCD District Technician

Joseph McIntosh is a newly hired District Technician for the Comal-Guadalupe Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The SWCD was awarded a grant from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board to hire a technician who can assist farmers and ranchers in developing Water Quality Management Plans (WQMP) for their individual operations. The grant also provides financial incentives to help producers implement approved practices.

Nutrient and bacteria loading from agricultural operations are identified in the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks WPP as potential sources of pollution in area creeks. A site specific WQMP is developed by working with a land owner to identify, design, and implement practices that will protect water resources. The plan includes appropriate land treatment practices,

production practices, management measures and technologies. Examples of key practices include prescribed grazing, fencing, watering facilities, pipelines, wells, grassed waterways, pasture/hayland/rangeland planting, riparian buffers, filter strips, and others.

“There is no cost to the landowner for development of the WQMP,” says McIntosh. However, there may be costs for implementing certain practices, but financial assistance is available in most cases.

If you need assistance or are interested in learning more, you can contact Mr. McIntosh at (830) 379-0930 x107, or stop by the office at 3251 N. Hwy 123 Bypass in Seguin.

Come to the Partnership meeting June 10th and meet Joseph. At the meeting, he will present an overview of how he is assisting area farmers and ranchers.

Feral Hog Workshop

For more information about feral hogs go to:

<http://feralhogs.tamu.edu/>

<http://wildlife.tamu.edu/wildlifemanagement/feral-hog/>

The first Feral Hog Workshop to ever be offered in the watershed is scheduled for Friday, May 23, 2014 from 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Texas Agricultural Education and Heritage Center, also known as The Big Red Barn, 390 Cordova Road, Seguin. Check in begins at 8 a.m. the morning of the event.

Speakers will include representatives of AgriLife Extension, Texas Animal Health Commission, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Wildlife Services and the Texas Department of Agriculture. Topics will include basic ecology and biology, feral hog effects on the Geronimo Creek watershed, regulations for transporting, disease concerns, population dynamics and control techniques, including traps, as well as hunting regulations. There also will be discussion of feral hog resources available to the landowner.

“Each year feral hogs do millions of dollars of damage to property, crops

and watersheds, as well as serving as potential vectors for disease,” said Jeff Hanselka, AgriLife Extension agent for agriculture and natural resources, Guadalupe County. “This program will give participants some useful information about feral hogs, especially their behavior and ways to control them.”

Hanselka said they have applied for five Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units — two general, two integrated pest management, and one in laws and regulations — for commercial, non-commercial and private applicators attending the program.

The cost is \$25 and includes lunch. Preregistration is required by May 20 to ensure an accurate meal count.

Preregister by calling the AgriLife Extension office for Guadalupe County at 830-303-3889 or email Hanselka at j-Hanselka@tamu.edu.

Lone Star Healthy Streams Workshop

A Lone Star Healthy Streams workshop is planned for June 5 at the Texas Agricultural Education and Heritage Center, also known as the Big Red Barn, 390 Cordova Road, Seguin.

“The Lone Star Healthy Streams program aims to educate Texas livestock producers and land managers on how to best protect Texas waterways from bacterial contributions associated with livestock production and feral hogs,” said Jennifer Peterson, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service program specialist in College Station.

The workshop will begin at 10 a.m. and end by 3 p.m. A catered lunch will be provided.

The workshop is sponsored by the Texas Agricultural Education and Heritage Center and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and is free to all participants. Three Texas Department of Agriculture general continuing education credits will be provided for certified pesticide applicators.

Currently, about 300 Texas water bodies do not comply with state water quality standards established for *E. coli* bacteria. By participating

Do you have something you would like to contribute to the newsletter? Or, would you like to see us provide information on a particular topic? Suggestions can be sent to Ward Ling at wling@ag.tamu.edu or call 979-845-6980.

in this workshop, livestock producers and landowners can learn about specific conservation practices that can help improve and protect the quality of Texas' water bodies.

"The workshop will focus specifically on issues within the Geronimo and Alligator creeks watershed, which recently completed a watershed protection plan," Peterson said.

Workshop presentations will focus on specific best management practices to help minimize bacterial contamination originating

from beef cattle, horses and feral hogs.

The Lone Star Healthy Streams program is funded through a Clean Water Act nonpoint source grant from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

To RSVP for the workshop and to get more information about the Lone Star Healthy Streams program, go to <http://lshs.tamu.edu/workshops/> or call Peterson at 979-862-8072.

Smart Growth Workshop

Thirty people attended a Smart Growth Workshop offered by the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Partnership held March 25th at the GBRA River Annex in Seguin.

The goal of the workshop was to better equip decision makers to evaluate the impacts of nonpoint source pollution in growing communities.

Topics addressed in the workshop included: linkages between land use types, water quality, community character, reducing storm water runoff volume, and improving water quality through use of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques such as use of permeable pavements, rain gardens, vegetated swales, "curbless" streets, and other practices to enhance flood control.

The workshop combined in-class presentations and outdoor

demonstrations. Dr. Fouad Jaber, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Specialist in Integrated Water Resources Management, explained how different Smart Growth techniques can help mitigate the harmful effects of urbanization on stormwater volume and water quality. Attendees received 6 hours of Certification Maintenance credit from the American Planning Association.

The workshop was hosted by GBRA and AgriLife Extension as part of implementation of the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Protection Plan.

The Partnership plans to conduct this workshop annually in order to expand the use of LID technologies as urbanization and development move forward.

Septic Systems Classes

Upcoming Events

Feral Hog Workshop

Friday, May 23

8:30a – 3p

The Big Red Barn
390 Cordova Road
Seguin

Lone Star Healthy Streams Workshop

Thursday, June 5

10a – 3p

The Big Red Barn
390 Cordova Road
Seguin

Partnership Meeting

Tuesday, June 10

6p – 7:30p

GBRA River Annex
905 Nolan Street
Seguin

This publication was developed with funding support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through a Clean Water Act §319(h) Nonpoint Source grant administered by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

Fifty people attended the second round of Homeowner Septic System Maintenance classes on April 28th and 29th. One event was a 2-hour class providing basic training on the operation and maintenance of conventional and aerobic septic systems. The second event was a 6-hour class that provided more in-depth training on management of aerobic systems. Topics included treatment processes, health and safety considerations, how to inspect the system, and how activities in the home can impact system operation.

The classes were interactive and provided homeowners with answers to their questions.

Neither class certified homeowners to maintain their systems. Per county ordinance, homeowners in Guadalupe County have to be certified in order to maintain their system or must have a maintenance

provider contract. Comal County does not have this requirement.

The two classes will be offered again this fall. Watch for the announcement in the newspaper and on our website so you can register to attend.

One big difference in the 6 hour class this fall is that we anticipate being able to offer certification for homeowners that wish to maintain their own system. We will confirm our ability to do so when the class is announced.

For more information about septic systems, go to the [septic system tab](#) on the project webpage. There you will find free educational publications, online modules showing the working of conventional and aerobic systems, and the educational materials used for the 2-hour classes.

Next Partnership Meeting

The Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership will meet Tuesday, June 10th at 6:00 p.m. at the GBRA River Annex, 905 Nolan Street, Seguin.

Presentations will cover past and upcoming workshops and a recap of the Clean Up Event (wear your event T-shirt). We will hear from a representative of the Guadalupe County Master Gardener Program about how to become involved with

their organization, and from Joseph McIntosh, the new District Technician with the Comal-Guadalupe SWCD. Mr. McIntosh will present an overview of how he is working with area farmers and ranchers to improve and protect water quality.

Come find out how you can get involved. We hope to see you there! For more information contact Ward Ling at 979-845-6980 or wling@ag.tamu.edu