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Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership offering free area soil testing

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COLLEGE STATION -- The Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership is offering free soil testing to area farmers, ranchers and homeowners, said Ward Ling, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service program specialist, College Station.

“A soil test will give you the necessary information on what levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients are in your soil,” said Ling, the agency’s watershed coordinator for Geronimo and Alligator Creeks.

He said having a soil test will help area landowners determine how much, if any, fertilizer is needed, as well as what kind should be used.

“Fertilizer is expensive, costing around a dollar a pound or more, and it comes in varying types and concentrations,” Ling said. “To help make sense of all of this, you first need to test your soil to see what the nutrient content is before deciding if more is needed -- and how much.”

Ling said samples must be submitted in a soil sample bag that can be obtained at AgriLife Extension offices in Comal and Guadalupe counties.

The AgriLife Extension office for Comal County is located at 325 Resource Drive, New Braunfels. The phone number is 830-620-3440.

The AgriLife Extension office for Guadalupe County is located at 210 E. Live Oak St. in Seguin. The phone number is 830-303-3889.

Sample bags must be returned to these locations starting Oct. 15, with a deadline of Nov. 17. Lab results will be made available for pickup on Dec. 8 at the Guadalupe County Extension office. A short presentation Dec. 8 at the Guadalupe office will provide participants with information on how to interpret the lab results.

“If you are unable to attend the presentation on Dec. 8, you can contact me or the county office to obtain your results,” Ling said.

He said a short YouTube video on how to properly collect a soil sample can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jT7-ERu6zYY>, plus directions may be found on the back of the soil sample bag.

“It is important that people having their soil tested pay attention to and follow proper directions for obtaining a soil sample,” Ling said.

Geronimo Creek and its Alligator Creek tributary, which flow through Comal and Guadalupe counties, were identified for watershed protection plan development due to concerns about high levels of nitrogen and elevated levels of bacteria, he said.

“A watershed protection plan was developed and accepted by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2012,” Ling said. “Free soil testing is made available to area residents as a result of implementing this plan.”

For more information, contact Ling at 979-845-6980 or wling@ag.tamu.edu.

To view a copy of the plan and for more information on the partnership, go to: <http://geronimocreek.org>.

A federal grant was provided to AgriLife Extension by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board from the EPA to facilitate the implementation of the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks watershed protection plan.