

April 2022

THE GERONIMO FLOW

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

GERONIMO & ALLIGATOR
WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

A Note from the Watershed Coordinator

Spring has sprung! I hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful weather and colorful wildflowers these days. Do you know what else is great about April? It's the time we celebrate our planet! Since 1970, Earth Day has been observed annually on April 22 to raise public awareness of environmental problems by promoting environmental stewardship and sustainable living practices. To celebrate the 52nd Earth Day, the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership will hold the 9th Annual Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Cleanup Event on April 30. We invite everyone to join this community-wide effort to help keep our watershed healthy and beautiful! Scroll down to learn more about our spring cleanup and sign up to participate! We look forward to seeing everyone later this month!



Evgenia

Upcoming Events

- 💧 April 30, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Cleanup Event
- 💧 May 25, 8 a.m.–12 p.m. Texas Watershed Steward
- 💧 June 1, 8 a.m.–1 p.m. Lone Star Healthy Streams

Funding for this effort is provided through a Clean Water Act §319(h) Nonpoint Source Grant administered by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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Earth Day

Every year we celebrate Earth Day to promote awareness about environmental concerns and respect for our planet. Observance of Earth Day dates back to the 1960s, when a major environmental movement spread across the country, leaving a lasting legacy of American environmentalism.

It may be hard to imagine, but back then the public was largely unaware of impacts of their everyday actions on the health of the planet. People drove cars fueled by leaded gasoline and discharged toxins from factories and chemical plants directly into rivers and the atmosphere. In 1962, Rachel Carson, an American writer and ecologist, published her groundbreaking book "Silent Spring", in which she highlighted the detrimental impacts of people's daily actions on the health of our planet, and ultimately the health of humans themselves. Her thought-provoking discussion of the harmful effects of pesticide overuse on the planet's biodiversity and human health immediately sparked the interest of public officials, scientists, and the American public. Carson's ideas revolutionized the way people thought about their place in the natural world, giving rise to one of the largest environmental movements in the history of the United States.

Other influential literature that followed "Silent Spring" resulted in a wave of environmental activism and public activism across the country. This movement led to the idea of celebrating an "Earth Day", when Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, Republican Congressman Pete McCloskey, and a Harvard student Denis Hayes organized a series of campus discussions to spread in-

formation about the rapid deterioration of the environment. The first Earth Day was celebrated on April 22, 1970, uniting more than 20 million people in nationwide rallies and demonstrations. These rallies led to increased environmental policy development, including the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and many more legislations addressing the urgent need for protection of the environment. By 1990, Earth Day became a global effort that brought together 200 million people from 141 countries. These numbers continued to grow, reaching 1 billion people from 192 countries that observe Earth Day every year by volunteering their time and energy to protect our planet.

Earth Day continues to inspire people around the world to take initiative and make a difference. Cleanup events, community beautification projects, and educational activities in schools are some of the ways people celebrate Earth Day every year. Today, we can witness the proof of the widespread environmental awareness everywhere we go - bicycle lanes, windmills, electric cars, recycling bins, solar batteries, and more. And though we have made significant progress, a lot more needs to be done to address the issues of air and water pollution, deforestation, wildfires, and other environmental problems that face our world. These issues are global in scale, but every individual has the potential to make a local difference and leave a long-lasting impact on the world.

How can you help to make our planet a better place? Below are just a few suggestions.

- Foster pro-environmental behaviors in your family
- Recycle
- Plant a tree or garden
- Have a reusable water bottle
- Turn off the light and water when not in use
- Use less paper



- Commit to reusable shopping bags
- Pick up trash
- Use energy-saving light bulbs
- Carpool
- Volunteer at environmental events



By starting with these little steps everyone can make a big impact on the health of our planet!

Happy Earth Day!

9th Annual Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Cleanup Event

We are excited to announce the 9th Annual Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Cleanup Event! This year's event will occur on **Saturday, April 30th**, from **9 a.m. to noon**.

The orientation meeting will start at 9 a.m. - join us for free coffee and breakfast at either of these locations:

- Irma Lewis Seguin Outdoor Learning Center (1865 US 90, Seguin)
- Oak Creek Elementary School (3060 Goodwin Ln., New Braunfels)

Pre-registration is required. To learn more about the Event and sign up to participate, please visit our [website](#).

All participants are required to fill out the [Liability and Photo Release form](#) prior to participating. If you are bringing a group, you may download this form for everyone to sign in advance and return to the watershed coordinator the day of the event.

This Event would not have been possible without our dedicated sponsors and partners! We appreciate your continuous support!



WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ON APRIL 30TH!

Texas Watershed Steward

All watersheds in Texas are threatened by nonpoint sources (NPS) of pollution which are detrimental to the valuable water resources of the state. To help combat this threat, federal and state water resource management agencies have adopted a watershed-scale approach for managing water quality. One vital component of this approach involves engaging local stakeholders to become actively involved in planning and implementing water resource management and protection programs in their watershed. Water quality issues specific to Geronimo and Alligator Creeks, along with land and watershed management, will be discussed. The event is free and open to the public. Both in-person and virtual attendance options are available. Pre-registration is required for either attendance option. Professional continuing education credits are offered, including those for certified crop advisors, Texas Department of Agriculture private pesticide license holders (3 general CEUs), professional engineers, certified planners (APA), landscape architects, professional geoscientists, certified teachers, certified floodplain managers, and select TCEQ occupational license holders.

Wednesday, May 25

8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Guadalupe County AgriLife Extension Office
(210 E. Live Oak St., Seguin, TX 78155)

Lunch will be provided

Pre-registration is required: <https://tw.s.tamu.edu/workshops/registration/>

For questions, contact Michael Kuitu - michael.kuitu@ag.tamu.edu or 979-862-4457



Lone Star Healthy Streams

Fecal bacteria originating from livestock operations and wildlife pose serious risks to human health. This workshop will focus on three watersheds - the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks watershed, Mid and Lower Cibolo Creeks watershed, and Plum Creek watershed. Basic watershed function, water quality, and specific best management practices related to pastureland, beef cattle, and feral hog management will be discussed. Attendees will have the opportunity to observe some of the best management practices during the outdoor portion of the workshop at a local farm. 2 IPM CEUs will be available! To learn more about the program, please visit: <http://lshs.tamu.edu/>

Wednesday, June 1

8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

The Big Red Barn
(390 Cordova Rd., Seguin, TX 78155)

The registration link is coming soon

Lunch will be provided

For questions, contact Leanne Wiley - leanne.wiley@ag.tamu.edu or 979-862-8072



Bacterial Source Tracking Analysis in Geronimo Creek

Understanding what types of sources contribute fecal bacteria to Geronimo Creek is critical for effective implementation of the in the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks WPP. Our partners from Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority conducted the Bacterial Source Tracking (BST) analysis to identify origins of fecal bacteria found in Geronimo Creek.

From April 2019 through March 2020, water samples were collected every month at two locations – Haberle Road and the Seguin Outdoor Learning Center. The results indicated that the majority of fecal bacteria detected in the creek originated from non-avian wildlife, including feral hogs, deer, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, and other species. Other sources included avian wildlife (ducks, turkeys, geese, etc.), cattle, avian and non-avian livestock (Guinea fowl, donkeys, etc.), humans (failing septic systems), and pets (dogs, cats). More information can be found [here](#).

The Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Partnership is actively integrating this important data into the public outreach and education strategies to increase awareness about water quality issues in Geronimo and Alligator Creeks.

Alligator Creek Trail Project



Photo credit: City of New Braunfels

The Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership is working with the City of New Braunfels on the design of a new linear trail park around Alligator Creek. Multi-use paths, natural features, educational signage, connections to neighborhoods, and other park design elements will be incorporated to provide local residents with an enhanced outdoor recreation experience.

Everyone is welcome to participate in public meetings conducted by the City of New Braunfels throughout the project development period. To learn more and find out the date of the next public meeting, please visit the [Alligator Creek Trail Project website](#).

Water Quality Management Plans

A *Water Quality Management Plan* (WQMP) is voluntary site-specific plan focusing on agricultural land improvement measures to minimize water pollution from nonpoint sources. Best management practices include brush management, incorporation of cool season overseeded cover crops, prescribed and rotational grazing, nutrient management, and fencing to prevent livestock from entering streams.

For more information, contact Cris Perez at (830) 379-0930, ext. 3, Cresencio.Perez@tx.nacdnet.net



Photo credit: Cris Perez



Homeowner Maintenance of Septic Systems

Need to become certified to maintain your septic system? Great news! You can complete the *Homeowner Maintenance of Septic Systems* course [online](#)!

Once registered, you will have 30 days to complete this class. Upon completion, contact your TCEQ authorized agent to finalize the certification process.

The Guadalupe County Environmental Health Office can accept this course for certification. If you reside in a county other than Guadalupe, please contact your TCEQ authorized agent to verify if the online program is sufficient to grant you certification.



SIGNS OF FAILING SEPTIC SYSTEMS

- Standing water around your septic tank
- Unpleasant smell
- Bright green lush grass around your septic tank
- Sewage backup
- Slowly draining bathtubs, showers, and sinks
- Noises in your plumbing system
- Excessive growth of algae in nearby ponds

Stakeholder Survey

Effective outreach and education is critical for successful implementation of the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Protection Plan. We always seek ways to improve what we do and would like to invite everyone to fill out our watershed stakeholder survey. Your responses will help us better understand our stakeholders' perceptions of local surface water quality and tailor our outreach and education efforts to meet your needs. If you haven't completed this short survey and would like to participate, please click [here](#). Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. We greatly value your time and input!

Interested in attending our events?

Contact Evgenia Spears at Geronimo.Alligator@ag.tamu.edu or (979) 845-2862

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Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership
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