

# The Geronimo Flow

December 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](http://www.geronimocreek.org)

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## Texas Well Owner Network Workshop Coming in January

Water well owners are independently responsible for monitoring the quality of their wells and are at a greater risk for exposure to compromised water quality. The Texas Well Owner Network Program is offering a 'Well Educated' Day Session on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015. This is a free, one-day educational training for Texas residents who depend on household wells for their water needs. Well Educated is for private well owners who want to become familiar with groundwater resources, septic system maintenance, well maintenance, water conservation, water quality and water treatment.

As part of the Well Educated Program, participants can bring their well water samples to be screened

for common contaminants including fecal coliform bacteria, nitrates, and total dissolved solids.

The Texas Well Owners training is supported from efforts by Texas Water Resources Institute, Texas A&M AgriLife and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board to improve water resources in the area.

### Where

The Big Red Barn  
390 Cordova Road  
Seguin, TX ([map](#))

### When

Wednesday January 28, 2015  
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
Lunch is on your own



Protecting your private water well is your responsibility.

Bring your water samples:

We are offering a screening of your well water for *E. coli* bacteria, nitrates and total dissolved solids (TDS) for \$12. Bring your water samples in approved bags to the training on January 28 at the Big Red Barn at 8:30am.

**Please read the Water Sample Collection Instructions (clickable link or see instruction sheet on the last page of the newsletter) if you are unsure how to correctly collect your water sample. If you are unclear on how to obtain a sample, contact Drew Gholson at 979-845-1461 or email [dgholson@tamu.edu](mailto:dgholson@tamu.edu) at least several days prior to the event.**

**You can pick up water sample containers at:**

GBRA – Regional Lab  
933 East Court St.  
Seguin, TX

Guadalupe County Extension Office  
210 E. Live Oak St.  
Seguin, TX

Comal County Extension Office  
325 Resource Dr.  
New Braunfels, TX

If you have any questions please call 979-845-1461 or email [dgholson@tamu.edu](mailto:dgholson@tamu.edu), or go to <http://twon.tamu.edu/training/?courseId=14830> for more information.

### Debbie Magin is Retiring

After 38 years of dedicated service as Director of Water Quality Services and the Regional Laboratory, Debbie Magin is retiring from GBRA the end December 2014. Debbie has worked diligently for 38 years to protect the water resources that are so valuable to the people in the Guadalupe and Blanco River basins. We are so appreciative of Debbie, her hard work, and her friendship for all these years. When asked about how she felt about leaving the position, Debbie said, “I have always viewed this as a privilege, and not as a job.” And that attitude has always shone through everything Debbie has endeavored to accomplish.

I could turn this short newsletter into a novel if I listed all of the accomplishments of her career with GBRA. However, specifically for the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks

project, her work has been instrumental to the success of the project. She has been the driving force to search out new ways to identify pollution sources, formed partnerships with community leaders and citizens alike, identified programs that will benefit the watershed, and secured funding that made things happen. We have all benefited and have been inspired by her work, her sense of humor, her professionalism, and her friendship.

Be sure to congratulate her and wish her all the best, and to extend a warm welcome Mike Urrutia as the new Director of Water Quality Services and the Regional Laboratory.

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) recently received a grant award from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to develop an educational program that will be used to enhance public understanding of the health of the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks riparian areas and ecosystem. The project is a collaborative effort between GBRA and the Irma Lewis Seguin Outdoor Learning Center (ILSOLC).

This project will assist the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership's efforts to address the bacteria impairment and nutrient concerns in the watershed through education and outreach.

The goal of the project is to design and implement educational components of the WPP that will serve as tools that can be utilized with elementary school students through high school, teachers, civic leaders, riparian landowners and with the general public in order to enhance understanding of the health of a riparian and creek ecosystem in the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks watershed.

The ILSOLC is perfectly poised in its location on the banks of Geronimo Creek to teach the message of stewardship and educating the public on riparian issues. School children of all ages from Seguin, New Braunfels, and Comal schools visit the facility annually. Classes rotate between stations to learn about fishing, kayaking, orienteering, and outdoor recreation. This project will expand that rotation by adding a station that focuses on the environmental health of the creek and its riparian habitat.

The project combines technology with on-the-ground demonstrations and outdoor education to implement behavioral change in stakeholders living and working in the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watersheds. The watershed protection plan states "An aggressive outreach and education program will be vital to successful engagement of watershed stakeholders." Several of the project's deliverables will highlight the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks watershed but will also be appropriate for use throughout the Guadalupe River Basin as well as across the state.

During the course of the project, GBRA will develop video and audio public service announcements focusing on two key nonpoint pollution sources identified in the watershed protection plan, pet dog waste and storm water quality. These public service announcements will be played on local media and on rolling ad monitors in businesses within the watershed. Also, GBRA will develop educational resources that include an interactive, flash computer module appropriate for all ages. The interactive computer module will provide information about the riparian processes and features at the touch of a finger to the computer screen. The module will be made available on new computers that will be installed at the ILSOLC and on the educational kiosk.

GBRA and partners will develop an educational riparian walk along Geronimo Creek that takes what was introduced in the computer modules and kiosk, outdoors. The nature walk will include an interpretive kiosk and signage. Also, a geocaching

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](mailto:wling@ag.tamu.edu) or call 979-845-6980.

## Upcoming Events

### Partnership Meeting

Tuesday January 13  
6p – 7:30p

GBRA River Annex  
905 Nolan Street  
Seguin

Texas Well Owner  
Network Workshop  
Wednesday January 28  
8:30am to 3:00pm  
Texas Agricultural  
Education and Heritage  
Center  
390 Cordova Rd  
Seguin, Tx

3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Creek Clean  
Up Event  
Saturday April 11  
Look for information to  
come out by late February

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“treasure hunt” will be developed that takes participants on a search for riparian plants and features along the creek.

The GBRA, with assistance from project partners, will oversee the development and design of Low Impact Development (LID) demonstration structures. The demonstration projects will include a vegetated swale, rain garden, and pervious pavement. A rainwater harvesting system and a garden that exhibits native plants and grasses will also be constructed. The GBRA and its partners will support demonstration projects by hosting

educational workshops that focus on reducing nonpoint source pollution. These educational workshops will be open to municipal officials, municipal staff, developers, and landowners on will focus on LID components. The demonstration projects will also be available and open to other adult educational opportunities offered at the ILSOLC, such as classes for Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners.

Plans are being made to install the rainwater harvesting system right after the New Year, so look for pictures of the new system in the next newsletter.

### Partnership Meeting January 13

The Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership will meet Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the GBRA River Annex, 905 Nolan Street, Seguin.

Ward Ling will open the meeting with a recap of past and upcoming workshops. We have many great opportunities in 2015 to take an active role in protecting our area creeks. Highlights include the upcoming Texas Well Owner

Workshop January 28<sup>th</sup>, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Creek Clean Up Event April 11<sup>th</sup>, Homeowner Septic System Maintenance Classes in the Spring and Fall, and many other opportunities.

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](mailto:wling@ag.tamu.edu)

# Texas Well Owner Network: Instructions for Collecting and Submitting Water Samples



- Wash your hands.
- Use a faucet as close to the well as possible for making the collection. If an inside faucet is used, remove the aerator on the end of the faucet before making the collection.
- Rinse and dry the exterior of the faucet to prevent exterior contamination of your water sample. If possible, wipe off with a Clorox-type towelette or paper towel wetted with a light bleach solution to kill any bacteria present on the faucet. **Allow the solution to dry before sampling.**
- Turn on the water full force and let it run at full force for two minutes.
- Reduce the water flow to a small stream.

## Bottle:

- **If a plastic bottle was provided, fill the sample container (plastic bottle).** This container has a line for **100 mL**. Please **fill the water slightly above** 100 mL line and do not rinse the powder out of the container. It is there to neutralize chlorine. Unless your sample is collected in a sterile container and every precaution taken to avoid contamination, the results of the analysis may be without value.

## Bag:

- Tear off the perforated strip above the yellow twist ties from the top of the bag. Grasp the small white tabs on the side of the water-sampling bag and pull the bag open (**be careful not to touch the inside of the bag with your fingers**).
- Holding the bag by the yellow twist ties, fill the sampling bag three-fourths full and then twirl the bag top over bottom to close it. Some water may leak out, but don't worry. Tie the twist ties together.
- Cost per sample is \$12.00. **\*\*\* Fill both the bag AND the bottle\*\*\*** This is one sample submission.

Submitting the Samples:

Please bring the samples at 8:30 a.m. on the day of the Texas Well Owner Training event. If you have any questions please call 979-845-1461

**Please Note:** samples should be collected within 24 hours before the training to ensure accurate results.

