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Public invited to January watershed meeting in Seguin

Event will address water quality in Geronimo, Alligator creeks

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SEGUIN – The Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board are inviting area residents to partner with them in addressing water quality issues in Geronimo Creek and Alligator Creek watersheds.

A meeting to address area water quality issues will be held Jan. 12 at the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority Annex Building, 905 Nolan Street in Seguin.

Registration and refreshments will begin at 6 p.m., with presentations from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

The agenda includes a welcome by Guadalupe County Judge Mike Wiggins, discussion and selection of steering committee members, watershed partnership ground rules, water quality protection planning, discussion on sources of pollution, and a question-and-answer session.

“This will be our first meeting of the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership,” said Nikki Dictson, AgriLife Extension water quality program specialist. “This meeting and all future meetings are being held to facilitate the public involvement in developing and implementing a watershed protection plan.”

Dictson added that watershed protection plans are designed to use best management practices to restore and protect surface waters affected by pollution.

Geronimo Creek and its tributary, Alligator Creek, flow through Comal and Guadalupe counties near New Braunfels and Seguin, she said. They were identified for watershed protection plan development due to concerns about high levels of bacteria and harmful nutrients.

The 2008 Texas Water Quality Inventory published by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality showed Geronimo Creek had elevated bacteria concentrations and nitrogen levels. The water body has been monitored by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority since 1996 as part of the Clean Rivers Program.

As area development and population growth continue and urban land use increases, the role of hydrology and the need for improved water quality will also increase, according to data by the cities of Seguin and New Braunfels and their respective water utilities.

“We are now inviting area residents and landowners to participate in solving these water quality issues by attending one of two project kick-off meetings and joining the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership,” Dictson said. “The public can join us at these meetings to hear how they can participate in the upcoming planning process.”

“The active participation of the citizens and landowners in the watershed is essential to the success of this important project,” said Debbie Magin, director of water quality services for the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority.

Key local partners supporting the process include Comal and Guadalupe counties, the cities of Seguin and New Braunfels, New Braunfels Utilities and the Comal-Guadalupe Soil and Water Conservation District.

“The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board is providing funding for the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service to facilitate the stakeholder process for developing a Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Protection Plan through a Clean Water Act grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,” noted Loren Henley, the state board’s project manager for Geronimo Creek.

For more information on the meetings or to RSVP, contact Dictson at 979-575-4424 or n-dictson@tamu.edu or Magin at 830-379-5822, dmagin@gbra.org .

More information on the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership can be found at <http://geronimocreek.org> .