

THE TEXAS WATER SOURCE

UPDATING COMAL AND GUADALUPE
COUNTY LANDOWNERS ON LAND
MANAGEMENT AND WATER ISSUES

November 15, 2018

STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT PLANS

Long-term care of private land is critically important to Texas. Sound management practices increase land productivity and enhance ecosystem services provided by forests. These critical benefits include clean air and water, improved wildlife habitat, and additional opportunities for quality outdoor recreation.

Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) promotes land stewardship to landowners all over Texas—from the Pineywoods of East Texas to the West Texas Panhandle. Professional assistance is tailored to your individual needs.

A written plan for your property is the foundation of good land stewardship. TFS foresters are available to help you develop a written 10-year course of action, outlining step-by-step measures that will enable you to meet your goals and objectives for your property.

A TFS forester will meet with you on your property to discuss your land objectives and how to meet those objectives. A multi-purpose Stewardship Plan addresses numerous resource elements including timber, water, wildlife, forest health, and more.



Natural resources in the Central Texas region are threatened by poor land management, fire exclusion, invasive species, oak wilt, and rapid population growth. As a Texas landowner, you have the ability to conserve Central Texas trees and natural resources for future generations.

TFS is available to help address your interests in trees, wildlife, recreation, and water, as well as concerns about drought, wildfire, forest health, and diseases such as oak wilt. Call your local TFS office or a private consulting forester for

information on obtaining a Stewardship Plan for managing your property.

Successful implementation of a written Stewardship Plan can result in being nominated and recognized as good stewards of the land with the Certified Forest Steward award. This award is presented to any Texas landowner that owns at least 10 acres, has a written Stewardship plan, and implements aspects of that plan while using Best Management Practices that protect soil and water. Recipients receive a metal sign for their property and a certificate signed by the State Forester.

For more information:

- <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/LandownerAssistance>

Inside this issue:

Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership	2
Comal-Guadalupe SWCD	2
Watershed Protection Plan	3
Helpful Online Tool for Landowners	3

Organization Spotlight

GERONIMO AND ALLIGATOR CREEKS WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

The Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership (Partnership) is a collaboration between local citizens, cities, counties, and state and federal agencies. The purpose of the Partnership is to implement the Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) for the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed.

The 2008, Texas Water Quality Inventory and Texas 303 (d) List identified Geronimo Creek as impaired because the *E. coli* bacteria numbers exceeded the contact recreation stream standard established by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). In addition, Geronimo Creek was listed as a concern due to elevated nitrate-nitrogen concentrations.

The Steering Committee is the decision-making body for the Partnership. This Committee was developed to be representative of all the major interests in the watershed. Three work groups designated by the Steering Committee addressed specific issues, identified and made recommendations on implementation strategies, and supported development of the WPP. The three work groups were the Urban Nonpoint Source Work Group, Agricultural Nonpoint Source Work Group, and the Wastewater Work Group. A Technical Advisory Group composed of personnel from state and federal water quality agencies provided support and guidance.

Through a federal Clean Water Act §319(h) grant from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB), the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority

COMAL-GUADALUPE SWCD

A Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is brought into existence by a vote of the landowners within the boundaries of a district. A district's governing body, a board of directors, is made up of agricultural landowners, one from each of five subdivisions. Each district director must live in the district, own land in the subdivision he or she represents, and be actively engaged in farming or ranching. As independent political bodies, SWCDs communicate with state and federal agencies through the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB).

SWCDs work to bring a widespread understanding of the needs of soil and water conservation. In addition, they work to activate the efforts of public and private organizations and agencies into a united front to combat soil and water erosion and to enhance water quality and quantity in the state.

(GBRA), and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service facilitated the stakeholder process for development of the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Protection Plan.

Watershed planning was driven by local stakeholders and included the following key tasks:

- 1) identify desired water quality conditions and measurable goals,
- 2) prioritize appropriate management practices and needed education and awareness programs to achieve those goals,
- 3) assist in the development of the WPP document,
- 4) lead implementation of the plan at the local level, and
- 5) communicate implications of the WPP to other interested constituents within the watershed.

Anyone can be a member of the Partnership and participate in the project. Contact the project staff to receive email updates on upcoming meetings or project activities. See links below.

For more information:

- www.geronimocreek.org/Overview.aspx
- www.geronimocreek.org/Contact.aspx



The Comal-Guadalupe SWCD covers those two counties. More information for this district can be found at www.tsswcb.texas.gov/swcds/306 :

Comal-Guadalupe SWCD
3251 N. Highway 123 Bypass
Seguin, TX 78155-7415 Phone: 830-379-0930

SWCD meeting time -
9:00 a.m., 4th Tuesday of the month

SWCD meeting place -
NRCS Office
Creekside Professional Plaza
2115 Stephens Place, Building 2, Suite 200
New Braunfels

SWCD e-mail address -
comalguadalupe@swcd.texas.gov

WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN

Plan Development

The Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) was developed using EPA's *Getting In Step: A Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns*, as a guide for the general framework of the project. Development of the WPP followed EPA's *Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters*.

Extensive stakeholder input was provided throughout the WPP development process. A total of 12 Steering Committee meetings, 2 watershed tours, 9 work group meetings, and 2 public comment meetings were held over the course of 29 months to allow for public input into the development of the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Protection Plan.

Implementation

The WPP was accepted by EPA September 13, 2012, as meeting their guidance requirements for watershed plans. It is only the third WPP developed for Texas waters that has this designation. Since that time, implementation of the WPP has been underway. All implementation activities are voluntary, and are dependent upon a combination of factors such as stakeholder participation, financial and technical resources, and political will. To receive project updates and become involved, contact Ward Ling of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service at 979-845-6980 or wling@tamu.edu .

The Plan

The 2012 Plan covers all aspects of the WPP. It first defines watershed management and the benefits of taking a watershed approach when looking at water quality and ecosystem issues. Then, it gives an overview of the Geronimo/Alligator Creek watershed - its geography, features, land uses, and more. There is also information on the formation, structure, and meetings of the Partnership itself.

HELPFUL ONLINE TOOL FOR LANDOWNERS

An online tool called "got LAND?" has been added to the **Texas Forest Information Portal**, a web-based application (see <http://texasforestinfo.tamu.edu>).

Whether you're looking to purchase land for the first time or you just inherited property, this online application can help new landowners during the initial stages of acquiring property.

Based on the answers to a few short questions, management information and resources are provided to help

Methods of analyzing the pollutants present are covered, along with how the pollution sources were determined. Here is an interesting table showing the potential pollutant sources identified in this watershed:

Source Categories	Potential Sources	Bacteria	Nitrate-Nitrogen
Urban	Urban Runoff	X	X
	Dogs	X	X
Wastewater	Septic Systems	X	X
Agriculture	Cropland		X
	Cattle	X	X
	Horses	X	X
Wildlife and Nondomestic	Deer	X	X
	Feral Hogs	X	X

The plan goes into suggested management measures, how they will measure success, and how the project will be implemented, including outreach and education.

This Plan contains the nine key elements of Watershed Protection Plans: 1.) Identification and causes of impairment; 2.) Expected load reductions; 3.) Proposed management measures; 4.) Technical and financial assistance needs; 5.) Information, education, and public participation component; 6.) Schedule; 7.) Milestones; 8.) Load reduction evaluation criteria; and 9.) Monitoring component.

For more information:

- www.geronimocreek.org/Plan.aspx

you better care for your land and reach your property goals. Questions on property ownership goals, desired or current water features, past land uses, desired tax valuations, region of the property's location, and amount of acreage help the app to generate a report that gives you information that applies to your particular case. In order to see the report make sure pop-ups are enabled in your browser.

Get started at <https://gotLAND.tfs.tamu.edu>.

Texas A&M Forest Service offices serving you:

Robert Edmonson - Comal Co.
Johnson City office (830) 868-7949
redmonson@tfs.tamu.edu

Erin Wieser - Guadalupe Co.
Kerrville office (830) 792-8885
ewieser@tfs.tamu.edu

* * * *

Lori Hazel - Water Resources Forester
Temple office (254) 541-8798
lhazel@tfs.tamu.edu

Distribution of The Texas Water Source is provided free of charge to forest landowners of Comal and Guadalupe Counties. This publication is funded by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board through a Clean Water Act §319(h) grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. PLEASE ADVISE US IF YOU WISH YOUR NAME TO BE REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

Outdoor Learning Center

Beginning with an initial donation of 23 acres from local resident Carla Blumberg in 1995, the **Irma Lewis Seguin Outdoor Learning Center** (ILSOLC) has grown to over 115 acres. With incredible support from the community, the school district, local businesses, public and private foundations, and a legion of volunteers, the ILSOLC has provided the citizens of south central Texas with a multitude of recreational and educational opportunities.

This outdoor learning center, located on US Highway 90 East in Seguin, now has a fully functioning rainwater harvesting system. The system gathers rainfall from 1,000 square feet of roof surface on the pavilion, and channels it through a gutter and piping system to be stored in a 5,000 gallon tank. From there it is pumped through an underground pipeline to the garden area.

For documents on rainwater harvesting and making a rain barrel, go to www.geronimocreek.org/projects and click on the links. Scroll down farther down the page, and there is a video on storm water runoff, plus an interactive map with videos on riparian systems.

Go to www.seguinolc.org for more information on the Learning Center; or you can contact them at 830-379-7652, or by e-mailing info@seguinolc.org.



Texas A&M Forest Service
Water Resources
P. O. Box 310
Lufkin, TX 75902-0310

Email: dwork@tfs.tamu.edu

*Texas A&M Forest Service is an Affirmative
Action/Equal Opportunity Employer
committed to Excellence Through Diversity.*