

Newsletter

December 2021

Contact Us

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<http://millcreek.tamu.edu>

(979) 845-2862



Mill Creek Watershed Partnership

A Note from the Watershed Coordinator

As we approach the end of 2021, I am filled with gratitude for our amazing partners and stakeholders. Despite so many challenges, we have accomplished so much together!

Since resuming our face-to-face programs in August, we have delivered the 'Texas Well Owner Network', 'Homeowner Maintenance of Septic Systems', 'Texas Riparian & Stream Restoration', 'Lone Star Healthy Streams', and 'Texas Watershed Steward' workshops. In addition, we hosted the first-ever Mill Creek Cleanup Event, **removing 600 pounds of trash** from the watershed!

In 2022, we will continue raising public awareness of local water quality issues and educating residents about nonpoint source pollution through our programs and events. We will kick 2022 off with the Partnership meeting, which will provide an opportunity to connect with each other and exchange ideas about the implementation of the Mill Creek Watershed Protection Plan in the coming year. Scroll down for the meeting details!

Want to stay up-to-date on the upcoming programs? Follow us on [Facebook!](#) You can also visit our [website](#) to learn more about the Mill Creek Watershed Protection Plan and our programs.

May the New Year bring more exciting opportunities, prosperity, health, and happiness to all! Warmest wishes for a happy and safe holiday season and a wonderful New Year!

Evgenia

Upcoming Programs and Events

The details about the upcoming programs will be posted on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) once they become available.

Partnership Meeting

The Mill Creek Watershed Partnership in collaboration with AgriLife Extension Service will be hosting a public meeting to discuss local water quality issues and implementation of the Mill Creek Watershed Protection Plan. Stakeholders will be offered the opportunity to provide their input on the implementation efforts and project priorities for 2022. Everyone is welcome to participate. Dinner will be provided. Please RSVP if you plan to attend this event. We look forward to seeing you at our Partnership meeting in February!

Thursday, February 10, 2021

6 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Austin County Extension Office
(800 E. Wendt St., Bellville, TX 77418)

Mill Creek Cleanup Event

If you own land in the Mill Creek watershed, you are invited to participate in the 2nd Annual Mill Creek Cleanup Event by removing unwanted debris and trash from your property! We will have a centralized trash drop-off spot available for you to bring collected items. The event details including the date, time, trash drop-off location, and registration will be released as soon as they are finalized.



Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters (June 10)



The Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters program improves and protects surface water quality by enhancing awareness and knowledge of best management practices for residential landscapes. Topics include rainwater harvesting techniques for homeowners and lawn and management irrigation practices. This course offers free soil testing too! The program will take place in Austin County. The location, time, and registration details will be announced by March.

Virtual Homeowner Maintenance of Septic Systems Course

Interested in becoming certified to maintain your septic system? Great news! The Homeowner Maintenance of Septic Systems course is now available [online](#)! The course fee is \$150, and once registered, you will have 30 days to finish this class. Upon completion, contact your TCEQ authorized agents to finalize the certification process.

For Austin County residents

Erica Resendez at 979-865-5911 or planning3@austincounty.com

For Washington County residents

Mark Marzahn at 979-277-6290 or mmarzahn@wacounty.com

Both Austin and Washington Counties accept this course for certification. If you reside in a county other than Austin or Washington, please contact your TCEQ authorized agent to verify if the online format is sufficient to grant certification.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact Dr. Anish Jantrania at Anish.Jantrania@ag.tamu.edu.

Financial Assistance for Septic System Owners



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

When your septic system is failing, it is not treating waste properly. Leaking septic systems can contaminate underground drinking water supplies with pathogens dangerous to human health.

Financial assistance may be available to homeowners in the Mill Creek watershed to replace failing septic systems. Please reach out to the Watershed Coordinator to learn more:

(979) 845-2862
millcreek@ag.tamu.edu

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. The practices include but are not limited to brush management, conservation crop rotation, prescribed grazing, nutrient management, contour farming, and forage and biomass planting.

Five-step WQMP Participation Process

1. An individual requests planning assistance through the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
2. The plan is developed by the SWCD Technician with the assistance of Natural Resources Conservation Service and Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
3. The WQMP is approved by the landowner, SWCD, and NRCS, and certified by the TSSWCB
4. The individual implements the WQMP on their land
5. The status of the WQMP is periodically evaluated to ensure that the landowner implements best management practices as agreed in the implementation schedule



For more information on local WQMPs, please contact Faith Chase at (979) 865-3139, ext. 3 or Faith.Chase@tx.nacdnet.net

Stakeholder Survey

Effective outreach and education are critical for successful implementation of the Mill Creek Watershed Protection Plan, and we are always seeking ways to improve what we do! We would like to invite everyone to take our new 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 would like to complete this short survey, please click [here](#). Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. We greatly value your time and input!

Want to get involved?

Reach out to Evgenia Spears at millcreek@ag.tamu.edu or (979) 845-2862.



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