

## Newsletter

April 2022

### Contact Us

[millcreek@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:millcreek@ag.tamu.edu)

<http://millcreek.tamu.edu>

(979) 845-2862



MILL CREEK  
WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

TEXAS STATE  
**Soil & Water**  
CONSERVATION BOARD

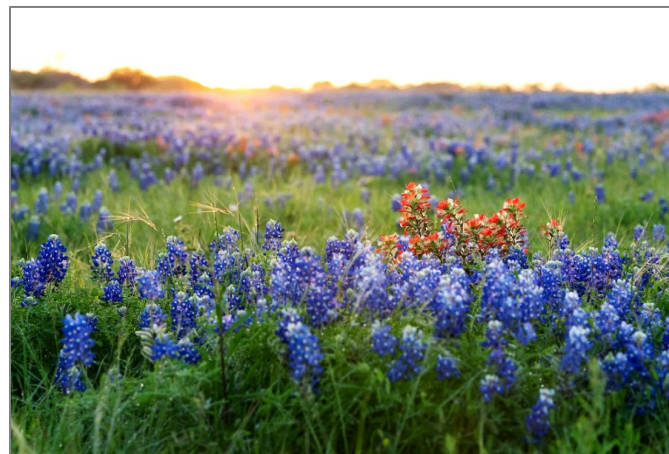
# Mill Creek Watershed Partnership

## *A Note from the Watershed Coordinator*

I am excited to announce the Feral Hog Program which will take place on Tuesday, May 3, in Cat Spring! The program features experts from AgriLife Extension and Texas Wildlife Services. All are invited to join the public discussion on feral hog control options in the Mill Creek watershed. *(Event and registration details on page 3)*

AgriLife Extension is developing a cookbook of tried and true, family tested and approved, feral hog recipes to raise awareness of the problem - and have a little fun at the same time. I am certain that Mill Creek Partnership Members have something to contribute! If you like the idea of becoming a contributor to our cookbook, feel free to share your favorite recipes and photos with me via [email](#) or a [Facebook](#) message. Let's choose the title, too! I have several options [here](#) – vote for the one(s) you like the most and/or suggest your own.

*Evgenia*



## 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 orga-

nized a series of campus discussions to spread information 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!**

## Feral Hog Program

Along with harmful effects on native ecosystems and agriculture, feral hogs cause problems with water quality in Mill Creek. Particularly during periods of low flow and drought, hogs congregate near available water sources to drink and wallow. In the process they deposit waste in the stream and undermine stream bank (riparian zone) integrity. The sheer number and intractability of hogs in our area requires consistent and widespread abatement efforts to protect local water quality and property.

Join us for a public meeting to discuss the feral hog management options in Austin County. The meeting will include presentations by speakers from AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Wildlife Services, along with a public discussion to determine the most suitable feral hog control measures.

The topics will include:

- Bounty programs
- Control measures
- Expert recommendations
- Funding

The preliminary agenda is available [here](#)

**Tuesday, May 3**

**6 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

Cat Spring Ag Society Hall  
(13035 Hall Rd., Cat Spring, TX 78933)

*Dinner will be provided by Schovajsa Catering*

**RSVP is required:**

<https://austin.agrilife.org/event-registrations/>

9,000,000 in the U.S.  
in Texas, over 2,600,000  
(as of 2016)

are an **INVASIVE, EXOTIC** species  
and limit numbers of  
**NATIVE** animals

methods  
of control:  
**HUNTING**  
**TRAPPING**  
**SNARING**

**FERAL HOGS**  
what's the pig deal?

have the highest  
**REPRODUCTIVE**  
**POTENTIAL**  
of any hooved animal

**\$52,000,000**  
worth of agricultural damage  
annually in Texas, with over  
**\$7,000,000**  
spent on control and repairs

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

The poster features a central image of a brown feral hog in a field. The text is arranged around the image, providing statistics and information about the impact of feral hogs. The title 'FERAL HOGS' is written in large, bold, black letters, with the phrase 'what's the pig deal?' written in a smaller, white, cursive font across the hog's back. The background is a light blue sky and a golden field.

## Additional Resources:

- » [Feral Hog FAQs](#) (Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute)
- » [Managing Feral Hog Damage](#) (AgriLife Extension Service)
- » [Feral Hogs in Texas](#) (Texas Wildlife Services, AgriLife Extension Service)
- » [Feral Hog Videos](#) (AgriLife Extension Service)

## Upcoming Events

### Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters

June 10, Location and time TBD

The Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters program aims to improve and protect surface water quality by enhancing awareness and knowledge of best management practices for residential landscape. The topics will include rain-water harvesting techniques for homeowners, and lawn and management irrigation practices.



This course offers free soil testing! The preregistration details and the soil sample pick-up/drop-off instructions will be announced closer to the date of the program.

### Mill Creek Cleanup Event

July 2022, Date and location TBD



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.

### Mill Creek Partnership Meeting featuring Dr. Bill Fox

August 2022, Date and location TBD

Join us for the Partnership meeting and a discussion with Dr. Bill Fox, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and the Rangeland, Wildlife & Fisheries Management Department at Texas A&M University. Dr. Fox's work focuses on impacts of vegetation on water resources and working landscapes. His talk will include the discussion of native grassland restoration and erosion control practices.



## 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 not operating properly, it becomes a liability for water quality and 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](mailto:millcreek@ag.tamu.edu)

## Virtual Homeowner Maintenance of Septic Systems Course

Need to become certified to maintain your septic system? Great news! You can complete the Homeowner Maintenance of Septic Systems course [online](#)! 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](mailto:planning3@austincounty.com)

For Washington County residents

**Mark Marzahn** at 979-277-6290 or [mmarzahn@wacounty.com](mailto: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.

## Water Quality Management Plans

A *Water Quality Management Plan* (WQMP) is a 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 on local WQMPs, please contact Faith Chase at (979) 865-3139, ext. 3 or [Faith.Chase@tx.nacdnet.net](mailto:Faith.Chase@tx.nacdnet.net)

## Mill Creek Stakeholder Survey

If you haven't completed our Mill Creek Stakeholder Survey, please take a moment to fill it out [here](#). Your input will be used to improve outreach and education in the Mill Creek watershed. We greatly value your time and feedback!

## Want to get involved?

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

*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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If you wish to stop receiving messages from the Mill Creek Watershed Partnership, simply reply STOP to this email.

Mill Creek Watershed Partnership  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
2474 TAMU  
College Station, TX 77843