

MILL CREEK WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES



AUGUST 9, 2022

MILL CREEK WATERSHED

- 263,450 acres
- Predominantly rural
- Permitted discharges:
 - City of Bellville
 - City of Industry
 - City of Burton
 - Kieke Egg Farm



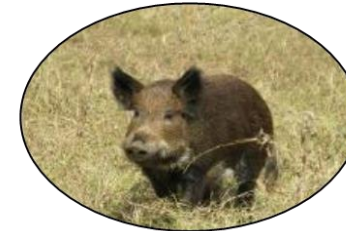
MILL CREEK WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN

- 2010 – Mill Creek listed impaired due to elevated *E. coli*
- January 2015 – WPP initiated
- February 2016 – WPP accepted by EPA
- WPP functions to restore and protect water quality in Mill Creek
- All measures are voluntary
- Heavy focus on public outreach and education

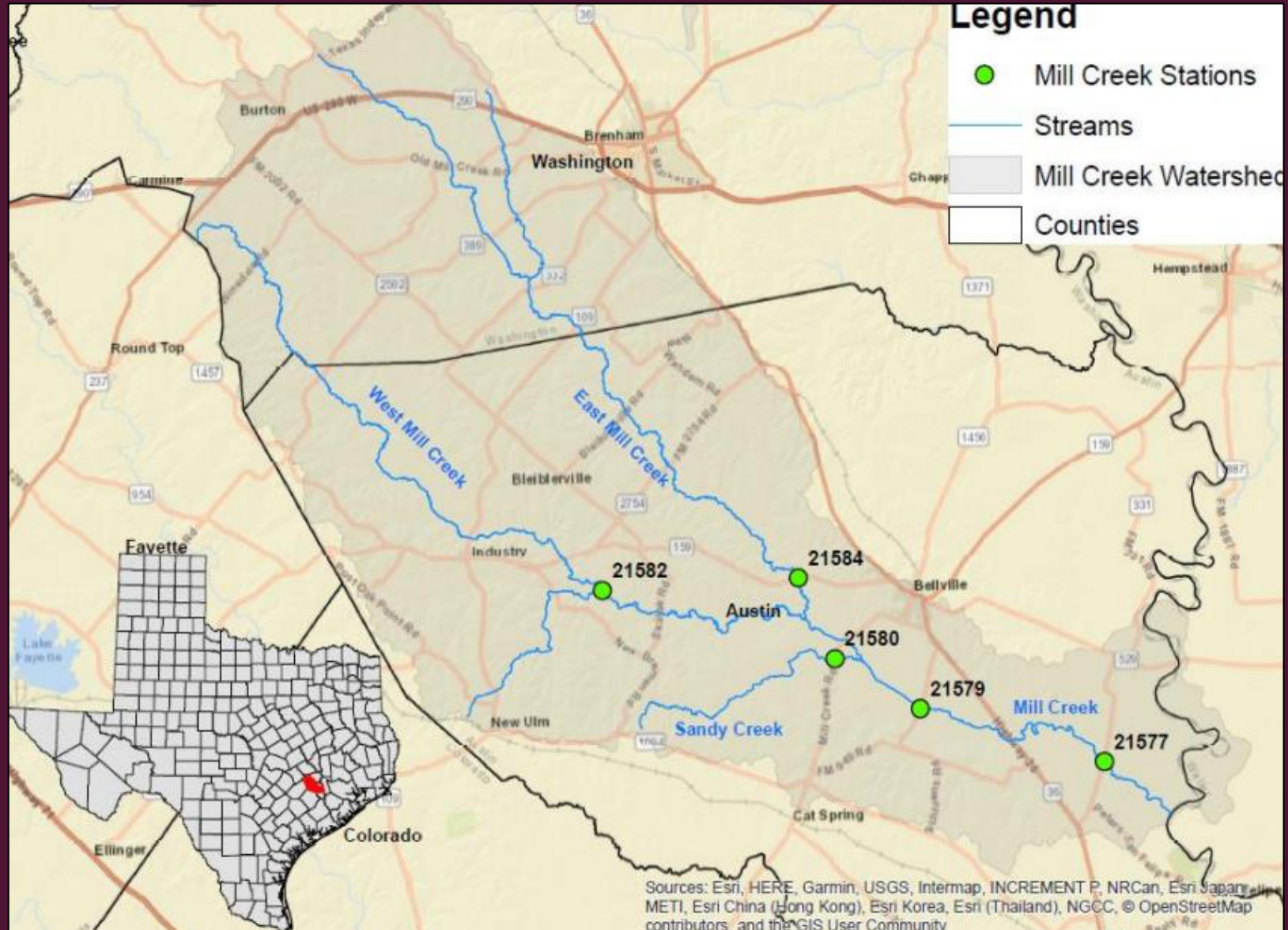


MAJOR SOURCES OF POLLUTION IN MILL CREEK

- The *E. coli* bacteria originates from nonpoint sources
- Potential sources identified in the WPP:
 - **Urban** (stormwater, pet waste)
 - **Agriculture** (livestock, cropland)
 - **Wastewater** (failing septic systems)
 - **Wildlife and non-domestic animals** (feral hogs, deer)



WATER QUALITY MONITORING



WATER QUALITY DATA

21577 – MC at FM 331

21579 – MC at FM 2429

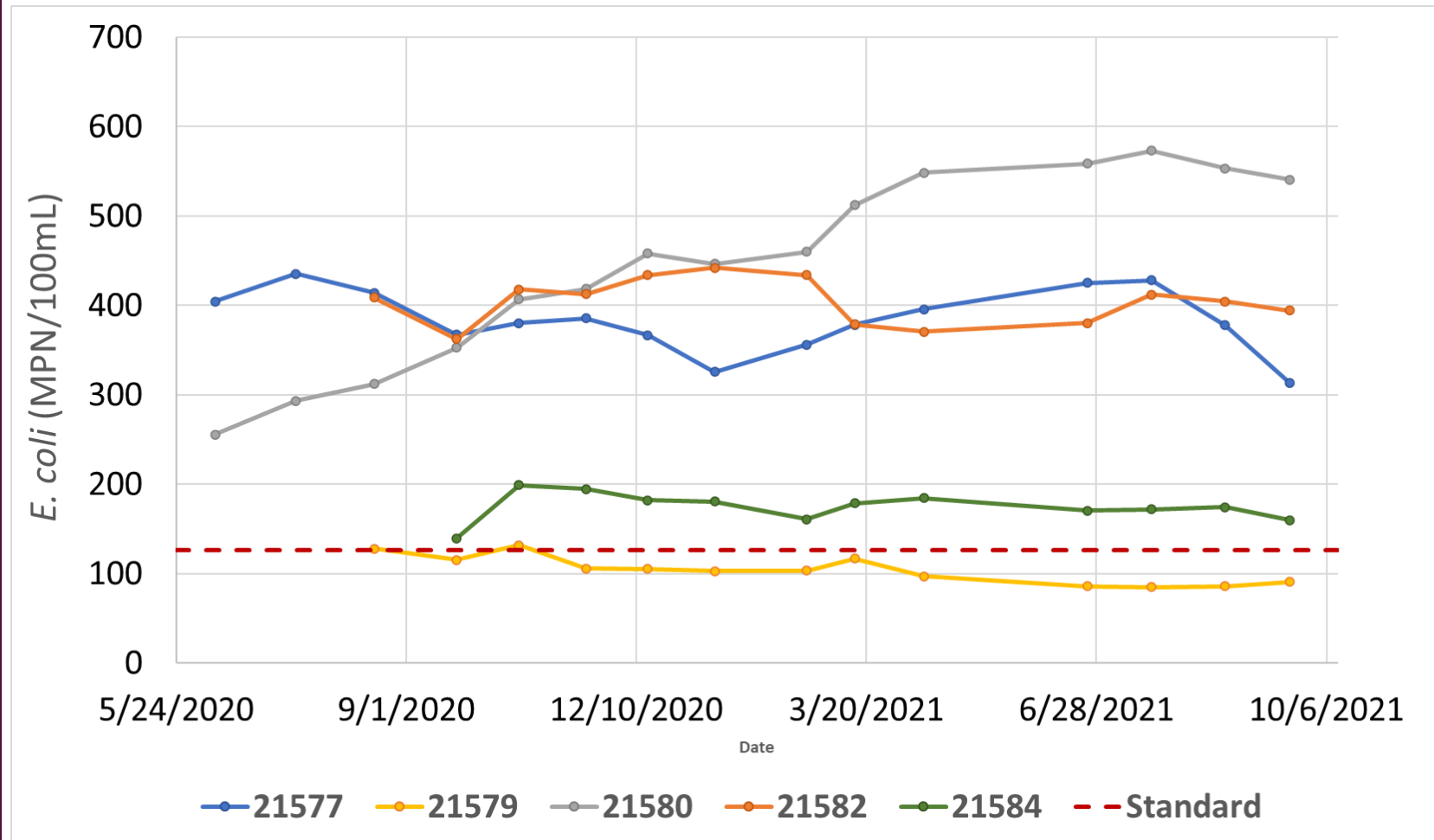
24580 – Sandy Creek at MC Rd.

21582 – W. MC at Tiemann Rd.

21584 – E. Fork MC at FM 159

***E. coli* Standard:**

126 MPN/100mL



PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Educational programs
 - Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters
 - Texas Watershed Steward
 - Texas Well Owner Network, etc.
- Watershed-wide Cleanup Day
- Feral hog abatement efforts
- Water Quality Management Plans



MILL CREEK CLEANUP DAY

2021

- Private landowners in the watershed
- Provided a centralized trash drop-off location
- 600 pounds of trash and debris removed!

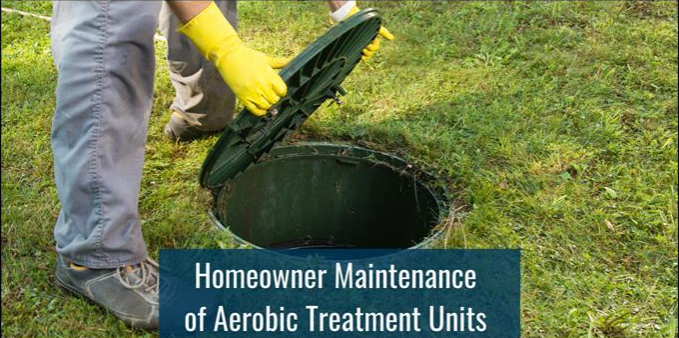
2022

- August 13 at 9am-4pm, Bleiblerville VFD
- Only for Mill Creek watershed residents



HOMEOWNER MAINTENANCE OF SEPTIC SYSTEMS - ONLINE

- Available via AgriLife Learn
- 7-hour course with quizzes
- 30 days to complete
- Course fee: \$150
- Eligible for certification in Austin and Washington Counties
Other counties – check!




**Homeowner Maintenance
of Aerobic Treatment Units**

COURSE INFORMATION

An aerobic septic system, or aerobic treatment unit (ATU), uses oxygen to breakdown both dissolved and solid constituents into gases, cell mass, and non-degradable material contained in wastewater. This online course will teach you how to properly maintain and operate your ATU.

Topics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the basic operation and maintenance activities for an ATU• Be a better consumer in the onsite wastewater treatment industry• Have the knowledge needed to understand and communicate with maintenance providers	Course Details <p>Cost: \$150</p> <p>Duration: 30 days from sign-up date</p> <p>To register, go to tx.ag/EnrollAerobicTreatment and click 'Enroll Now'.</p> <p>Available to Texans in approved counties starting April 1.</p> <p>Visit tx.ag/HomeAerobicTreatmentSystems for more information.</p>
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Contact
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FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR SEPTIC SYSTEM OWNERS

- Financial assistance to septic system owners in the Mill Creek watershed
- Contact Watershed Coordinator
 - (979) 739-1097
 - millcreek@ag.tamu.edu



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

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

- Site-specific land improvement plans to minimize and/or prevent water pollution through voluntary management practices
- Developed through collaboration with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)
- Examples of practices: fencing, brush control, livestock pipelines, etc.
- For more information:

Washington County SWCD – (979) 830-7123 ext. 3

Austin County SWCD – (979) 865-3139 ext. 3



FERAL HOG ABATEMENT IN AUSTIN AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES

- Feral Hog Bounty Program in Austin Co. sponsored by Austin County Commissioners Court
- County Feral Hog Grant – Texas A&M Wildlife Services
 - For Austin and Washington Counties
 - Activities considered: purchase of equipment, trap sharing, educational events, bounty
 - Stakeholder input gathered on May 3 (meeting notes on website, www.millcreek.tamu.edu)
 - Met with County Judges and Commissioners
 - Next: Proposal development and submission

QUESTIONS?



Austin County Feral Hog Bounty Program

Sponsored by: Austin County Commissioners Court

Austin County Bounty Program:

Subject to fund availability, participants will be awarded \$5 per feral hog harvested in Austin County. Biological evidence **MUST** be provided of harvest in form of a pair of feral hog ears. Each pair must be placed in an individually sealed bag and dropped off to 1 of the 3 drop off locations.



*Only 20 pairs
per household
per month*

**\$5/pair
of ears**

Drop Off Locations:

- Steinhauser's (Sealy location **ONLY**)
- Linseisen's Feed & Supply (Bellville)
- Lindemann Store (Industry)



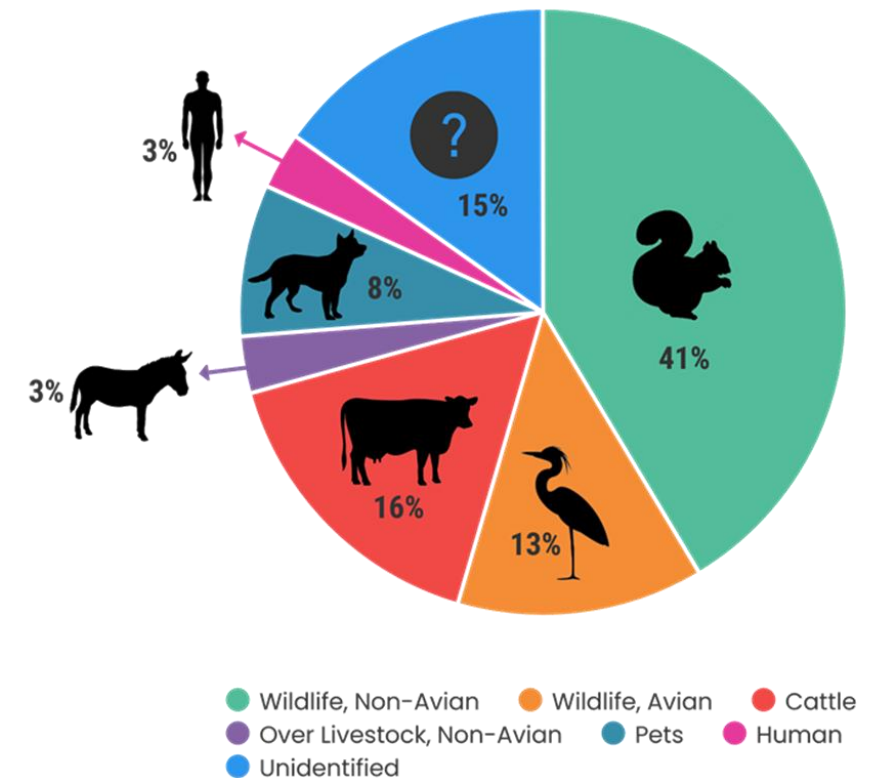
*Feral hogs can be harvested until funds are depleted. All feral hog **MUST** be harvested in Austin County.*

BACTERIAL SOURCE TRACKING IN MILL CREEK

- Identifies sources of *E. coli* bacteria
- Improves public outreach and education
- Through TSSWCB Nonpoint Source Grant Program
- Partners:
 - Texas Water Resources Institute (sampling)
 - TAMU Soil & Crop Sciences (analysis)
- All partners met and discussed the course of action
- Next: Proposal development and submission

QUESTIONS?

Example: BST in Geronimo Creek, Seguin, TX



WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

- Attend Mill Creek Watershed Partnership meetings
- Stay in touch with your County Extension Agent
 - Austin County – **Stacie Villarreal**, Stacie.Villarreal@ag.tamu.edu or (979) 865-2072
 - Washington County – **Kara Matheney**, Kara.Matheney@ag.tamu.edu or (979) 277-6212
- Visit **www.millcreek.tamu.edu**
- Follow us on Facebook: **@MillCreekWater**
- Reach out to the Watershed Coordinator at **millcreek@ag.tamu.edu** or (979) 845-2862

THANK YOU!

Evgenia Spears, Ph.D.

Mill Creek Watershed Coordinator

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

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