JULY 2024

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION | MILL CREEK WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

Mill Creek Watershed Newsletter

I want to express my enthusiastic gratitude to everyone who attended our stakeholder meeting on April 25 - we had a wonderful time of discussion and collaboration! It was an honor to hear directly from people in the community who were willing to share their concerns about local water quality. Groups of community members worked on identifying issues ranging from erosion and flood control to feral hog management.

A complete summary of the meeting can be found at millcreek.tamu.edu.

As we continue to work together on implementing the Mill Creek Watershed Protection Plan, remember that you are our most valuable resource! Without your input, we won't know what the most current issues are or how to best address them. If you ever have questions, concerns, or new ideas on how to address local water quality, please reach out!

Best wishes,

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Newsletter Highlights

www.facebook.com/MillCreekWater

TEXAS STATE Soil & Water CONSERVATION BOARD

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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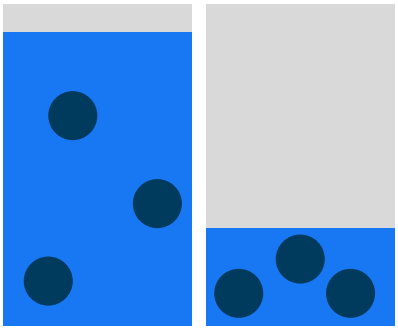
MEASUREMENTS MATTER: STREAMFLOW

Just as a doctor takes measurements like blood pressure and temperature to assess a patient's health, we take measurements in Mill Creek. But what are these measurements, and why do they matter? This is the first article in series exploring water quality data collected in our watershed.

Streamflow is one of the most basic measurements taken in a creek. Put simply, it tells us how much and how fast water is flowing through a section of the creek. It is reported in units of volume over time (e.g. cubic feet per second or cfs). But how does this relate to water quality?



The **volume** of water flowing through a creek can influence the concentration of pollutants. Many impairments, including elevated bacterial levels, are an issue of **concentration**. Bacteria are naturally present in any water body, but an abundance of bacteria in a small volume of water can cause risk to people and wildlife. A greater volume of water can dilute pollution present in the creek to a safe concentration, where a reduced flow can allow pollutants to concentrate and become hazardous.

Water **velocity** is the speed at which water travels through the creek. With fast flows, water can cause erosion and carry excess sediment downstream. These soil particles can carry pollutants as well! Nutrients, bacteria, and other potential contaminants can attach to sediment and travel downstream. As water slows, sediment can settle out of the water column, taking attached particles along.

Volume and velocity must be considered together when assessing water quality. A high volume of water at low speeds can suggest good water quality, but a high volume at high speeds can release more contaminants into the creek. We measure streamflow because it matters!

JULY 2024

Watershed Calendar

Summer

Aug 30 - Lone Star Healthy Streams

Come learn about raising backyard poultry, managing feral hogs, and grazing livestock while protecting local water quality! Register at https://austin.agrilife.org/event-registrations/

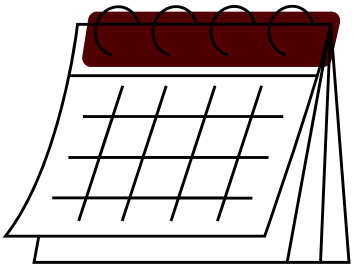
Fall

Sept 13 - In the Heart of Texas

Join the Mill Creek Watershed Partnership in learning about efficient water use, fertilizer management, and selecting the best plants for your lawn and garden! A brief update on the watershed protection plan will be included. Register at https://austin.agrilife.org/event-registrations/

October - Fall Cleanup

If you live in the Mill Creek Watershed, be on the lookout for more information about our Fall Cleanup. We provide a free dumpster for landowners who want to remove waste from their property, especially if it comes out of Mill Creek!



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