

# Mill Creek Watershed Newsletter



The weather has turned and we are well on our way to Spring. On our March 6 water quality sampling trip, we saw the first of the Indian Paintbrushes popping up along the creek, and now the wildflowers are in full bloom! If you are interested in learning more about plants that grow near the creek, understanding streamflow and erosion, or managing riparian vegetation, consider registering for our April 22 workshop. This program includes presentations from watershed experts, connections with local resources, and a stream walk. Find more information in the calendar at the end of this newsletter! You will also see an invitation to the 2025 Brazos River Authority (BRA) Clean Rivers Program Stakeholder meeting. This is a great opportunity to hear about the work the BRA is doing to protect water quality in our river basin, and to hear an update on the Mill Creek Watershed Protection Plan. Looking forward to connecting with you,

*Annalee Epps*

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## Newsletter Highlights

A Note from Your Watershed Coordinator

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Measurements Matter: Dissolved Oxygen

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Upcoming Events 2025

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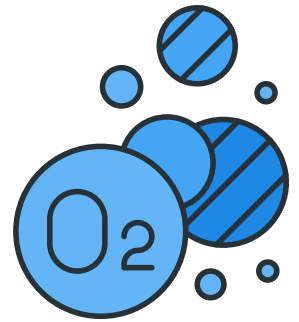
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# MEASUREMENTS MATTER: DISSOLVED OXYGEN

Did you know that there is oxygen in the water flowing in our creeks and streams? Just as you breathe in air, fish and other aquatic animals take in water to get oxygen. But what does the concentration of dissolved oxygen tell us about water quality in Mill Creek? This is the fourth article in our series exploring the water quality data collected in our watershed and why it matters.

Just like carbon dioxide is a gas dissolved in liquid to give sodas their bubbles, **dissolved oxygen (DO)** is gaseous oxygen dissolved in water. Measurements of DO can be performed with color-changing reagents on a water sample or with a sensor that is placed in the stream. The concentration of DO in water can be reported as mg/L, with a larger number indicating more oxygen.



There are two primary ways that oxygen enters water: exposure to air and photosynthesis by aquatic plants. A windy day on a lake or the cascade of a waterfall can add oxygen to water by increasing the surface area of the water exposed to air. Aquatic plants contribute oxygen to the water as they photosynthesize, releasing small bubbles from their leaves.

Mill Creek needs DO to support aquatic life including fish, insects, and mollusks. These animals all require a minimum concentration of DO to survive and thrive in their environment.

**Decreased DO** can be the result of elevated water temperature, large influxes of decomposing plant materials, or water stagnation. If there is a sudden drop in DO, there may be a large fish kill or other loss of aquatic life. It is important to consider DO to understand ecosystem health when monitoring water quality in the creek. We measure DO because it matters!



# Watershed Calendar

## Spring

### **April 10 - Brazos River Authority Clean Rivers Program Stakeholder Meeting**

The annual meeting of the CRP Steering Committee will be in Waco and is open to the public. The Committee will review water quality-related activities in the basin and ensure that local concerns are heard. For more information, visit

<https://brazos.org/about-us/environmental/texas-clean-rivers-program>

### **April 22 - Riparian Management Workshop**

A half day workshop covering everything you need to know about managing your property near the creek! Healthy riparian zones can reduce erosion, increase biodiversity, and intercept nonpoint source pollution. Register today at [tx.ag/riparianwkshp](http://tx.ag/riparianwkshp).

## Summer

**May 3 - Bellville Farmer's Market Visit**

**August 28 - Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters**

## Fall

**Fall Cleanup**

