

The Plum Creek Current

A Newsletter of the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership

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Watershed Work Wins Regional Awards

Two different efforts in the Plum Creek Watershed recently were awarded 2010 Community Stewardship Awards by Envision Central Texas, a nonprofit organization working to manage regional growth in a sensible manner. Recipients were selected based on innovative efforts to address challenges related to this growth while preserving natural resources, economic vitality, social equity, and overall quality of living.

Taking Charge of Water Quality in the Plum Creek Watershed, a cooperative project coordinated by GBRA and AgriLife Extension, was funded by a TCEQ Clean Water Act grant. This initiative, which conducted numerous outreach events and created materials for use in presenting information to diverse audiences on a number of wastewater and stormwater management issues, was recognized in the Raising Public Awareness category.

With funding from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Outdoor Recreation Local Park Grant Program, the City of Kyle purchased property to develop a new park and expand outdoor recreation opportunities. The resulting *Plum Creek Preserve and Nature Trail*, which will total more than 300 acres and offer nature trails, fishing lakes, picnic areas, and a wildflower meadow, was recognized in the Public Planning and Policy category.

Oscar Fogle of GBRA, Nikki Dictson of AgriLife Extension, Debbie Magin of GBRA, and Caldwell County Commissioner Joe Roland accept their award for Taking Charge of Water Quality from Ann Stafford of Envision Central Texas

Hays County Judge Liz Sumter, City of Kyle Mayor Lucy Johnson, and Kyle Parks Director Kerry Urbanowicz show off the award for the Plum Creek Preserve and Nature Trail



State Continues Rapid Population Growth

According to the latest population estimates released by the United States Census Bureau in June, many more people continue to call Texas home. Between April 1, 2000 and July 1, 2009, the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex added 1.3 million people, a growth rate of approximately 25%. Four of the ten fastest-growing cities in the nation over this period are located in the Lone Star State, including No. 1 Frisco, a rapidly expanding

community in the Dallas area. This growth was not limited to north central Texas. A number of areas across the state were among the fastest-growing in the nation, including Austin and surrounding cities. Austin grew to become the 15th largest city in the country, and neighboring communities have followed suit. A diversified economy was identified as a key factor in the population growth. As higher populations bring

additional development to Central Texas and the Plum Creek Watershed, there will be many challenges in addressing the changing needs of the area. More growth will mean greater pressure on both the quality and quantity of local water resources. However, these challenges should be viewed as opportunities to develop innovative approaches that can lead the way in environmental stewardship. We have no other choice.

City of Kyle Marks Progress in Water Outreach

As a visible encouragement for city residents to protect their local streams and water supplies, the City of Kyle is installing markers on stormwater drains within city limits. The markers serve as a reminder that everything that flows into the drains eventually is discharged to streams in the Plum Creek Watershed. Water and the materials carried in runoff receive no treatment before meeting Plum Creek or its tributaries, meaning oil, pet waste,

paint, fertilizers, and pesticides can have a tremendous effect on water resources if not properly handled. The markers are part of a TCEQ Clean Water Act grant awarded to the city to conduct outreach among local citizens and reduce potential water pollution from a number of sources in the city. Using GPS technology, city personnel have located approximately 1,800 stormwater drains and will eventually mark these as part of the outreach program.



Blue markers like the one shown soon will be installed at stormwater drains throughout the City of Kyle

BMP Spotlight: Water Conservation

For those who can bear it, summer can be a time to tend to gardens and landscapes planted earlier in the year. In what typically is the driest and hottest time of year, many gardeners are focused on merely keeping plants alive. Long, warm days and a consistent southerly

breeze have made the moist soils of spring a distant memory. By now, soil beneath some lawns has turned rock hard, and sensitive plants have started to become stressed. When the need for watering is apparent, follow a few simple guidelines. Do not over-water your lawn. If a periodic watering schedule is not enough, consider switching to native species that are more tolerant of drought conditions. If not using an in-ground system, position sprinklers so that water falls only on the lawn or garden, not on the sidewalk,

driveway, or street. No matter how hard you try, plants will not grow there, and you are only wasting money! For gardens and flower beds, use trickle irrigation or soaker hoses to reduce runoff and increase watering efficiency. These also help lower the amount of water lost due to wind action and evaporation. Water conservation is not limited to the outdoors! Inside, use low-flow toilets and shower heads where possible, and repair leaky faucets and toilet reservoirs. By making wise decisions now, we just might have a little more water for when the next drought strikes.



Using water wisely, especially in drier periods, can go a long way in preserving supplies

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Next Partnership Meeting

6-9 PM on August 12, 2010
Lockhart State Park Recreation Hall
Snacks will be provided before the meeting.

Lockhart State Park is located at 4179 State Park Road/FM 20 west of U.S. Highway 183 in Lockhart.

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