

Plum Creek Watershed Partnership Meeting set for Nov. 10 in Lockhart

November 2, 2011 By: [Paul Schattenberg](#)

LOCKHART — A Plum Creek Watershed Partnership meeting has been set for 6:30-9 p.m. Nov. 10 at Lockhart State Park Recreation Hall, 4179 State Park Road and Farm-to-Market 20, west of U.S. Highway 183 in Lockhart.

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Topics will include discussion of incremental progress to implement the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan, updates on the City of Kyle Clean Water Act implementation grant and the new City of Kyle Water Reuse Feasibility Study, Plum Creek Feral Hog Education Program, implementation of agricultural best management practices and the new grant to continue funding the partnership's efforts.

"The partnership is composed of area stakeholders who are leading efforts to work with citizens and landowners to implement voluntary strategies to protect and improve water resources in Caldwell and Hays counties," said Nikki Dictson, Plum Creek watershed coordinator and Texas AgriLife Extension Service program specialist in College Station.

Plum Creek rises in Hays County north of Kyle and runs south through Caldwell County, passing through Lockhart and Luling, then joining with the San Marcos River in northern Gonzales County.

"The effort to develop the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan was initiated in 2006 based on results from monthly water quality monitoring that indicated Plum Creek was impaired due to elevated levels of bacteria which exceeded state water quality standards and had nutrient levels above recommended thresholds," Dictson said. "Landowners and citizens and local governments have been implementing the plan since it was finalized in 2008."

Plan objectives are to identify potential sources of water pollution, and then educate and enable watershed residents to use voluntary approaches to improve the quality of vital water resources for the area.

"To develop this plan, public meetings were held to facilitate decision-making by landowners, citizens, community leaders, local water districts, and city and county officials on what strategies would be included in the plan," Dictson said. "Most importantly, all aspects of the plan are completely voluntary, so that cities, counties, businesses, homeowners and landowners can choose and do only those things they know will work the best for them."

Dictson said strategies within the plan include ways to reduce pollution from all of the potential sources including neighborhoods, city streets, cropland, and pastures, as well as working to address special problems like feral hogs.

"The primary pollutant of concern is E. coli bacteria, which is found in waste materials from people, pets, livestock and wildlife. Sources of nutrients include these same waste materials, as well as fertilizers and composts which are used for lawns, athletic fields and parks, businesses, cropland, pasture and hayland."

The partnership is currently in the fourth year of implementation and there are numerous ongoing efforts to improve water quality within the watershed, Dictson said. For more information on the partnership and its efforts, go to <http://plumcreek.tamu.edu/> or contact Dictson at 979-458-3478 or n-dictson@tamu.edu



The next Plum Creek Watershed Partnership meeting will be from 6:30-9 p.m. Nov. 10 at Lockhart State Park Recreation Hall. (Texas AgriLife Extension Service photo)

According to B.J. Westmoreland, district technician for the Caldwell-Travis Soil and Water Conservation District, landowners in the Plum Creek watershed can apply for financial incentives through the district to defray much of the cost of certain water quality protection practices.

“Farmers and ranchers can choose from a number of management practices, most of which are eligible for financial incentives,” Westmoreland said. “The decision by landowners to select and install best management practices on their property is voluntary. The district is there to help landowners with the process. These practices will not only benefit their land and the economics of their operation, but their entire community – now and in the future.”

Westmoreland said the Caldwell-Travis Soil and Water Conservation District, Hays County Soil and Water Conservation District and Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board have partnered to provide technical assistance and financial incentives for certain best management practices.

Eligible financial incentives include alternative watering facilities, cross fencing to support rotational grazing, rangeland planting, riparian herbaceous and forest buffers, pasture and hayland planting, grassed waterways, field borders and filter strips.

“The financial assistance typically covers 60 percent of implementation costs with a maximum reimbursement of up to \$15,000,” he said. “Plum Creek area landowners also can request a free water quality management plan for their property through their local soil and water conservation district that would include water conservation practices eligible for financial assistance.”

For general information on available financial assistance programs, or specific information on conservation practices eligible for financial incentives in the Plum Creek watershed, contact Westmoreland at 512-398-2121, ext. 3 or bradford.westmoreland@tx.nacdnet.net.

Funding for the development and implementation of the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan is provided through federal Clean Water Act §319(h) grants from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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