

## Water Quality Concerns

- Mill Creek was listed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on the Texas Integrated Water Report Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters in 2010, 2012, and 2014 due to elevated levels of *E. coli* bacteria.
- Elevated bacteria levels in the Mill Creek watershed raised concerns about water quality, public health, aquatic habitat, and reduced or lost recreational opportunities.

## AgriLife Extension's Response

- The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service partnered with the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board in 2014 to inform and educate local citizens about water quality concerns in the watershed.
- In 2015, stakeholders and agencies collaborated to form the Mill Creek Watershed Partnership and began drafting a watershed protection plan.
- AgriLife Extension led the formation of the Mill Creek Watershed Partnership, made up of local stakeholders working with state and federal agencies toward the shared goal of restoring water quality and protecting water resources in the watershed.
- AgriLife Extension guided the partnership through the development of the Mill Creek Watershed Protection Plan (WPP), a comprehensive management plan that identifies potential sources of water pollution and management measures needed to restore and protect water quality.
- To support the need for stakeholder involvement, the *Texas Watershed Steward Program* was initiated to provide science-based, watershed education to help citizens identify and take action

to address local water quality impairments.

- Through seven meetings and workshops, AgriLife Extension engaged 225 citizens and landowners (for a total of 642 contact hours) to improve public implementing the WPP.
- The Mill Creek Watershed Partnership made swift progress, completing the WPP in six months (June 2015).
- A new watershed coordinator came on board in September 2016 and rapidly began collaborating with local organizations. Educational programming, marketing, and community involvement activities are currently in development. The Mill Creek Watershed Partnership has made progress toward increasing communication and reaching area youth.

## Economic and Environmental Impacts

- The Mill Creek Watershed Protection Plan was formally accepted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2016.
- As a result of this designation, externally funded grants totaling \$549,000 over two years were secured to implement critical water-quality protection activities identified in the Mill Creek WPP.
- In 2015, the grant funds included more than \$225,000 for education and training programs.
- These grant-financed projects for improving and protecting the watershed support an additional six jobs annually in the region.
- AgriLife Extension continues to work with local stakeholders to implement the Mill Creek WPP to improve and protect the watershed for current and future generations.

## Extending Knowledge | Providing Solutions

[AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu/impacts](http://AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu/impacts)

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating

Contact  
 Douglas L. Steele, Director  
 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
 Ph. 979.845.7967 | Email: [dsteale@tamu.edu](mailto:dsteale@tamu.edu)  
 2016