

Sweetwater Creek watershed public meeting set for July 22, 2013 in Wheeler

Wheeler, TEXAS – The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research invite residents in the Sweetwater Creek watershed to a public meeting to discuss updates regarding water quality concerns. The meeting will be held at Wheeler County Ag & Family Life Center located at 7939 US Hwy 83 in Wheeler, Texas. Sign-in and refreshments will begin at 5:30pm and the meeting will start at 6:00pm and run until 8:00pm.

Sweetwater Creek flows approximately 69 miles from the Oklahoma State Line in Wheeler County to the upstream perennial portion of the stream northwest of Wheeler in Wheeler County (tributary of North Fork Red River). Sweetwater Creek is on the state's list of impaired waters for having bacteria levels that exceed water quality standards and has been identified as having a concern for nitrates.

At this meeting, landowners and citizens will have the opportunity to be updated on the findings from the first RUA field survey from the project, *Assessment of Water Quality and Watershed Planning for Five Creeks in the Canadian River and Red River Basins*, which focuses on providing stakeholders with sufficient information to address bacteria impairment concerns on Sweetwater Creek.

Since decisions made about these waterbodies will affect landowners, citizens, industries, and municipalities, local participation is fundamental to the success of this project. Stakeholders will be asked to provide guidance on the direction of this project.

“Stakeholder input will be critical to ensure the most accurate information is used when characterizing the watershed” Nikki Jackson with the Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research said. “We will need information on stocking rates for livestock, wildlife populations, feral hog estimates and urban influences. These inputs will help to estimate potential areas contributing bacteria.”

Stakeholders will be given an opportunity to review historical land use data and discuss how this effort will create an updated land use classification for the Sweetwater Creek watershed.

Leah Brown, with the Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research, will give background information on Sweetwater Creek and introduce the water quality monitoring plan. “Stakeholder input on sampling design and proposed sampling sites is crucial to the success of the project,” Brown said.

This project is funded by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board through a general revenue nonpoint source grant to the Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research.

For more information about the meeting, visit the project website at www.tsswcb.texas.gov/en/managementprogram/RUAASWEETWATER or contact Brown at 254-968-0513 or lrbrown@tiaer.tarleton.edu.

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board administers Texas' soil and water conservation law and delivers coordinated natural resource conservation programs through the State's 216 soil and water conservation districts. The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board is the lead agency for planning, implementing, and managing programs for preventing and abating agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint sources of water pollution. The agency also administers a water supply enhancement program through the targeted control of water-depleting brush; works to ensure the State's network of 2,000 flood control dams are protecting lives and property by providing operation, maintenance, and structural repair grants to local government sponsors; and facilitates the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee.

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