

# Buck Creek Watershed Partnership

Spring 2011 Newsletter  
<http://buckcreek.tamu.edu>

## Buck Creek Monitoring to Resume

Regular monthly water quality monitoring will begin again through a new project funded through the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Previous monitoring efforts ceased almost two years ago and have not been conducted since due to the funds being spent. This new monitoring project will provide additional data to document improved water quality in the creek during implementation of the watershed protection plan (WPP), and it will also provide needed information regarding the distribution and loading of nitrates into Buck Creek. Monitoring will be conducted at seven locations as listed in the table below.

Site	Location	County
3	CR 40	Collingsworth
5	SH 1056	Collingsworth
6	CR 110	Collingsworth
10A	Hwy 256	Childress
10C	Hwy 256	Childress
11	US 83	Childress
13	CR 19	Childress



Environmental Soil Scientist Dr. Paul DeLaune of Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Vernon will lead the continued monitoring effort, assisted by Phyllis Dyer, the Buck Creek watershed coordinator. "We think it is important to add Site 13 back into the monitoring regime as it provides needed information to quantify the impacts of what upstream watershed management will have on downstream water quality," Phyllis said.

Stakeholder engagement will be a critical part of this project as well. There has been a lull in stakeholder meetings and engagement that this project will remedy. Four additional stakeholder meetings will be held with the first planned for August 25, 2011.

## Developing a Buck Creek Watershed Partnership Logo

Logos are a great way to provide identity to a company, a product, or even an organization and could be beneficial to the Buck Creek Watershed Partnership. There are several accomplished artists among you, so we would like you to send us your ideas or even a mock-up of what you think a logo for the Buck Creek Watershed Partnership should look like. If you are interested in submitting a symbol for the group to choose from, please do so at your earliest convenience by e-mailing your ideas to Phyllis ([pmdyer@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:pmdyer@ag.tamu.edu)). *(continued on page 2)*

### Logo (continued)

All artwork will be voted on by the group during a future meeting. If you would like to peruse some artwork used by other stakeholders groups, you may find several examples in past editions of *txH2O*, *New Waves*, and the *Texas Water Journal*; all can be found at <http://www.twri.tamu.edu>.

### Buck Creek Stakeholders Highlighted

Buck Creek stakeholders Burl and Mary Brim were featured in an article entitled 'Stakeholders (that's you!) hold the key to improving Texas water.' This article was published in the Winter 2011 edition of *txH2O*, a triannual publication of the Texas Water Resources Institute. Copies of this issue of *txH2O* will be provided at the upcoming Partnership meetings and can be accessed online at <http://twri.tamu.edu/txh2o>.

In developing this article, various watershed coordinators were asked: "If you were to choose someone that epitomizes watershed stewardship, who comes to your mind?" When Buck Creek Watershed Coordinator Phyllis Dyer was asked that question, she didn't take more than a few seconds to answer: "Burl and Mary Brim." But, Phyllis didn't know the extent to which the Brim's have taken their stewardship of the property on Buck Creek. "The article is really worth your time and illustrates how stakeholders can and do make a difference in local efforts to restore and or protect water quality," she said.



Mary and Burl Brim

### Cooperative Effort Removes Feral Hogs

Eleven people from the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Texas AgriLife Research at Vernon gathered for a cooperative feral hog hunt that helped control the local feral hog population in the Buck Creek watershed. Local county animal removal officials partnered with APHIS personnel from Canyon, Austin and San Angelo to conduct aerial feral hog control. Texas AgriLife Research personnel collected fecal samples to add to the growing Texas *E. coli* bacterial source tracking (BST) Library housed at Texas AgriLife Research in El Paso. APHIS staff took blood and tissue samples for research on diseases and pathogens that the hogs may harbor.



The Buck Creek Watershed Coordinator and APHIS received permission from many landowners in the watershed to hunt an area that covered more than 30,000 acres. "This cooperative was a win-win for both groups, which have tried to combine efforts for more than two years now," Phyllis said. APHIS provided some funding for the hunt and TSSWCB provided funds for bacteria source tracking. "Cooperatives such as this are a great use of resources and result in the collection of data that otherwise would have been difficult to obtain," said Buck Creek Project Manager, Lucas Gregory, of the Texas Water Resources Institute.





Both groups found signs of feral hogs rooting around, in and burrowing underneath brush piles for shelter. Brush piles on three ranches were found to have burrows under them that were being used by feral hogs. While brush piles are great habitat for more desirable wildlife species, you should consider the prompt removal of these piles to prevent this from happening on your property. At the very minimum, these piles may present a good avenue to trap or snare feral hogs using them as shelter.

### **Feral Hogs: What Can You Do?**

While there are several new approaches to feral hog control on the horizon, trapping, shooting, snaring and catching them with dogs are about the only viable options that currently exist. Aerial gunning is one means to shoot a lot of hogs fast, but can be costly as permits are currently required from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. New

state legislation (House Bill 716) has been passed by the Texas House and Senate during this year's legislative session and was sent to the Governor on May 20. This legislation will ease requirements for aerial gunning and open the door for landowners to actually recoup some of the associated costs.

While we wait for changes to happen to allow for other means of feral hog control, trapping is one way that landowners can recover some costs incurred from feral hog damage. Once trapped, feral hogs can be taken to a holding facility and sold. Prices vary depending on the size of feral hog sold, but can be quite substantial for larger animals. Facilities currently operate in and around the watershed including locations in Chillicothe, Paducah, Quannah, Turkey and Wellington. A complete list of approved holding facilities can be found online at [http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/animal\\_health/feral\\_swine.html](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/animal_health/feral_swine.html) while additional feral hog information can be found at <http://feralhogs.tamu.edu>.

## Update on the Buck Creek WPP

The review of the Buck Creek WPP is nearing completion. Once comments from TSSWCB have been received, AgriLife Research and the Texas Water Resources Institute personnel will work to address comments quickly and get the revised draft document out to partnership members for your review prior to the next Buck Creek Watershed Partnership meeting. The WPP will be the primary topic of discussion at this upcoming meeting scheduled for August 25, 2011. An electronic copy of the WPP will be e-mailed to everyone in the partnership and printed copies can be requested from Phyllis at 940-552-9941 x 247.

## Buck Creek Water Quality Improvements a Success

As previously discussed in an earlier newsletter, Buck Creek has been recommended for removal from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) 2010 Integrated Report. This report is still in the process of being reviewed by EPA, and Buck Creek won't be officially considered unimpaired until this review has been completed and EPA agrees with TCEQ's recommendation.

A success story is currently being drafted to illustrate the progress made through the development of the Buck Creek WPP and best management practice implementation that ensued. Once developed, this story will be sent to EPA's Regional office in Dallas for review and inclusion in the national list of Section 319 Non-point Source Success Stories. To see other similar success stories from around the state and nation, log onto <http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/success319/>.

## Next Partnership Meeting Set

The next meeting of the Buck Creek Watershed Partnership has been scheduled for August 25, 2011. It will be held in Wellington at the Club Room of the Wellington Auditorium, 802 10th St. from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Doors will open at 6 p.m. and refreshments will be available. At this meeting, the WPP will be discussed in detail along with a brief overview of the new monitoring project that is now underway.

### Contact Information

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