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Water quality training Feb. 5 in New Braunfels will focus on Geronimo and Alligator Creeks

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New Braunfels – A Texas Watershed Steward workshop on water quality related to Geronimo and Alligator Creeks will be held from 1 p.m.-5 p.m. on February 5 at the Old Mill Resort Event Center, 1554 Gruene Rd in New Braunfels.

The workshop will be presented by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board in cooperation with the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership.

“This workshop is designed to help watershed residents improve and protect their water resources by becoming involved in local watershed protection and management activities,” said Michael Kuitu, AgriLife Extension program specialist and coordinator for the Texas Watershed Steward program, College Station. “The workshop is free and open to anyone interested in improving water quality in the region.”

He said participants are encouraged to preregister at the Texas Watershed Steward website at <http://tw.s.tamu.edu>.

The workshop will include a discussion of watershed systems, types and sources of water pollution, and ways to improve and protect water quality. There also will be a group discussion on community-driven watershed protection and management.

“The workshop will provide an overview of water quality and watershed management in Texas, but will primarily focus on area water quality, including current efforts to improve and protect Geronimo and Alligator Creeks,” said Troy Luepke, AgriLife Extension agent for Comal County. “It will address issues related to local water resources but will be applicable to all waters in the region.”

Geronimo Creek, which has been identified by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as an Ecologically Significant Stream Segment, is on the state list of impaired waters for elevated levels of bacteria. To address the impairment, a watershed protection plan was created for Geronimo Creek and its tributary, Alligator Creek.

“The watershed protection plan enables us to implement best management practices aimed at improving water quality throughout the watershed,” said Ward Ling, AgriLife Extension program specialist and watershed coordinator, College Station. “By attending this workshop you will not only understand how water quality is managed, but also learn how to become involved in water quality management,” said Ling.

Attendees of the workshop will receive a copy of the Texas Watershed Steward Handbook and a certificate of completion. The Texas Watershed Steward program offers four continuing education units in soil and water management for certified crop advisers, four units for professional engineers and certified planners, four credits for certified teachers, and two credits for nutrient management specialists. A total of four professional development hours are available for professional geoscientists.

In addition, three general continuing education units are offered for Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide license holders, and four for certified landscape architects. Four continuing education credits are provided to certified floodplain managers. Four continuing education credits are also offered for each of the following Texas Commission on Environmental Quality occupational licensees: wastewater system operators, public water system operators, on-site sewage facility installers, and landscape irrigators.

“Participating in the Texas Watershed Steward program is a great opportunity to get involved and make a difference in your watershed,” said Luepke.

Funding for this effort is provided through a federal Clean Water Act §319(h) Nonpoint Source Grant administered by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information on the Texas Watershed Steward program and to preregister, go to the website or contact Kuitu at 979-862-4457, mkuitu@tamu.edu; or Luepke at 830-620-3440, troy.luepke@ag.tamu.edu.

For information on watershed protection efforts for the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks watershed, contact Ling at 979-845-6980, wling@tamu.edu.