



“Currents” January 2018

YOU Can Protect the Guadalupe River

The Guadalupe River is an integral part of the character of Kerr County. It has shaped our communities, economy, and quality of life for generations. Most of us living here value maintaining the health of the river for ourselves and for the future. Whether you realize it or not, we all impact the health of the Guadalupe River in numerous ways as it weaves its way across our region. Similarly, we all share responsibility for the stewardship of this remarkable resource.

Factors that influence a waterway rarely occur at the water's edge, but come from a much larger area called the watershed. When it rains, water flows across land on its way to a stream, river, lake, or ocean. This drainage area is the watershed and the condition of the land and the activities taking place on it have a direct influence on water quality.

In general, urban watersheds have a greater impact on waterbodies than undeveloped land. The urban landscape is covered by impervious surfaces such as parking lots, roads, and buildings. When rain falls on these surfaces, it does not soak into the soil or slowly make its way to the nearest creek. Instead, it rushes downhill quickly and picks up contaminants along the way. For this reason urban runoff is one of the leading causes of poor surface water quality across the U.S. Pollution from urban runoff is often called non-point source pollution. It has many origins such as nutrients from fertilizers, fecal bacteria from pet waste or malfunctioning sewer or septic systems, household chemicals, or even excess dirt from construction sites. When it rains, these substances are swept up by runoff and carried into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, or river. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the local waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing, and drinking water.

Luckily there are many opportunities for individuals and businesses to initiate practices that can reduce stormwater runoff and prevent these types of pollution. We can be better stewards of the river by eliminating these sources of pollution from the watershed and by reducing the amount of stormwater runoff that is generated during rain events which will also help prevent flooding. Permeable pavements, rainwater harvesting, terracing, and rain gardens are examples of green stormwater infrastructure solutions to slow the overland flow of rainfall and trap contaminants by keeping rain close to where it falls instead of funneling it to drainage systems. Many of these solutions will be discussed at an upcoming seminar at UGRA. The content of the seminar will be of interest to everyone, whether you are an engineer, developer, contractor, landscaper, planner, or homeowner.

We invite you to join us for the Green Stormwater Infrastructure seminar on January 31st from 11:45 AM – 2:00 PM at UGRA. The seminar is free of charge, includes lunch, and certain continuing education credits are available. It is brought to you by the City of Kerrville, Upper Guadalupe River Authority, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and the Hill Country Master Gardeners. For details and registration, look for the seminar link at www.ugra.org or call UGRA at (830) 896-5445.

Let's Keep Our River Clean

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