



“Currents” May 2020

UGRA Summer Programs and Volunteer Opportunities

With only a few days of school left on the calendar and temperatures well into the 90s, there is no doubt that summer is here! It won't be long before locals and summer vacationers are splashing around in the Guadalupe River. Although, monitoring the water quality of the river is a year-round job, UGRA implements additional programs in the summer that focus on the increased recreational use of the river.

The Summer Swimability Study is a longstanding UGRA program that runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day to monitor bacteria levels at popular swimming holes. We collect samples from twenty-one sites throughout Kerr County during fifteen consecutive weeks. The water samples are analyzed at the UGRA Environmental Laboratory for *E. coli* bacteria and the results are compared to guidelines for contact recreation. This year, we will kick off our Swimability Study on May 26th and test results will be posted weekly on UGRA's website (www.ugra.org).

In 2004, UGRA began the Volunteer Summer Study Program to supplement data collected during the Swimability Study. Interested members of the community volunteer to collect water samples for bacteria analysis at a location of their choice. The program not only encourages the participation of local citizens in water quality testing, but the information collected by the volunteers helps identify areas in need of further investigation. In 2019, UGRA was assisted by 30 volunteers who collected 374 samples at 34 locations throughout Kerr County. We hope to expand the program this summer, so please contact me if you would like to participate in the Volunteer Summer Study.

Each summer, UGRA hosts a River Clean Up to remove trash from the Guadalupe River and remind us that keeping our river clean is a year-round responsibility. We plan to hold the 17th Annual River Clean Up on July 25th and will implement a modified format to comply with recommendations for public gatherings at the time of the event. The River Clean Up will be staged at Flat Rock Park in Kerrville and participants will work throughout Kerr County to remove trash from swimming holes, water crossings, drainage ditches, creek beds, and roadways. Once volunteers return to Flat Rock Park with their trash, they will stop their vehicle at several stations spaced throughout the park to drop off trash, return supplies, and pick up snacks, drinks, prizes, and t-shirts. Even with this modified format, we still plan to reward our hardworking volunteers, so make sure you register today because the first 300 registered volunteers will receive a free 2020 River Clean Up t-shirt designed by a local student artist. Last year, the River Clean Up was a great success thanks to many generous sponsors and the 526 participants who collected over 10,695 pounds of trash.

We are very excited to kick off this summer's programs and we need your help to make them a success. Please feel free to contact me if you would like more information.

Let's Keep Our River Clean

Tara Bushnoe, Natural Resources Coordinator for UGRA, tbushnoe@ugra.org or (830) 896-5445