



“Currents” June 2017

UGRA Summer Programs

Summer is in full swing in the Hill Country! The kids are out of school, the temperatures are soaring, and people of all ages 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 kicked off our Swimability Study on May 30th and test results are posted weekly on UGRA’s website (www.ugra.org/swimability.html).

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 2016, UGRA was assisted by 26 volunteers who collected 327 samples at 29 locations throughout Kerr County. This summer’s volunteers have already begun collecting samples, but it is not too late to sign up. 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. This year, the 14th Annual River Clean Up will be held on July 22nd and it will be staged at Flat Rock Park in Kerrville. Participants will be encouraged to spread out from the central location and pick up trash at other swimming areas, parks, and water crossings throughout Kerr County. Refreshments will be provided to volunteers and awards will be handed out for the most unusual item and the biggest item. Prizes will be raffled off and the first 200 volunteers will receive a free 2017 River Clean Up t-shirt designed by Kerrville ISD student Bonnie Lee. Last year, the River Clean Up was a great success thanks to many generous sponsors and the 433 participants who collected over 9,200 pounds of trash.

UGRA and Kerr County have initiated a new summer program in 2017 called the Litter Prevention Patrol. Local peace officers are monitoring popular swimming holes all summer long to encourage everyone to “Pack it In. Pack it Out” by distributing garbage bags and reminding river users of litter laws. If you see one of these hard-working officers at your favorite swimming hole, please thank them for their work and help them keep our river clean!

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