



TEXAS STREAM TEAM NEWSLETTER

HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL CHAPTER

WORKING TO PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS



THE MEADOWS CENTER
FOR WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

TEXAS STREAM TEAM



Volume 2024, Issue 3: December 2024

Monitor's Corner

Skills Check: Flow Severity



1. No flow/Pools



2. Low



3. Normal



4. Flood (out of banks)



5. High



6. Dry

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Flow Severity is one of the Field Observations community scientists make at their monitoring site each month, and it is one of the most important. While an actual discharge reading can provide more information, flow severity still provides important insight on the state of the stream and how water quality might be impacted. It can also help put some water quality results into perspective. The most obvious example is for bacteria, which you

might expect to be higher when flow severity is high after a large rain event, but which might point out a problem if high levels are present at normal or low flow severity. While bacteria is the most obvious example, the other parameters can also be impacted by different flow severities, making the Observation important for reviewing data and trends or outliers.

When recording Flow Severity, community scientists should remember:

- Flow Severity is not asking about discharge or how fast the water is flowing. While related, Flow Severity could be better thought of as "Flow Level" or the amount of water in the channel.
- Flow Severity levels can have a range. For example, just because water is a little lower than you usually see it, it doesn't mean it is "Low", and the same goes for "High".
 - For "Low", you will typically see part of the channel exposed in some areas as there is not enough water present to reach both banks.
 - For "High", you will typically see non-aquatic vegetation on the banks submerged in the water when it is normally above the water level.
- Flow Severity Values 4, 5, and 6 are not in order like the first three. "Flood" would actually be a higher water level than "High" and would be out of the banks.
- If the Flow Severity is "Flood" or "Dry" you will not be able to collect any water quality samples, but you can still submit a monthly report with Flow Severity and any other Field Observations and comments you can safely determine.

The newest updated version of the [Standard Core Water Quality Manual](#) is available on the Texas Stream Team website.

Flow Severity values are discussed on page 26 of the Standard Core Manual.

You can also review Texas Stream Team monitoring videos on YouTube.

YouTube Review

Watching the YouTube videos or re-reading the manual are great ways to refresh your memory and double-check your monthly monitoring procedures between QA sessions. Always review the newest updated manual.

Safety Briefing: Weather Awareness

As with any outdoor activity, especially ones conducted near waterways, it is vitally important for community scientists to be weather aware when preparing for and conducting their monthly monitoring.

The weather forecast should be checked before going to your monitoring site, as it can help prepare for what clothing or other items you will need to bring. Information on the recent weather could also provide helpful information, such as if it rained recently and if the banks might be muddy or slippery.

Weather awareness and your smartphone

While recent weather and the forecast should be checked before leaving home, it is also important to remember that weather conditions can change quickly and incoming threats are not always apparent from your location. For situations where the weather might change unexpectedly, or when you need to keep an eye on nearby storms, your smartphone can provide you with critical warnings. However, your smartphone is only as good at providing warnings as you allow it to be, so the following are suggested before outdoor activity:

- Make sure you have a weather app downloaded onto your phone, and that you know how to check the forecast and any available alerts.
- Make sure when checking the forecast or current conditions you are looking at your monitoring area and not just where you live. Most apps will change your current location automatically, but if you want to check the forecast for your monitoring site

before leaving you should be able to save additional locations and toggle between them.

- Make sure your app has permission to send push notifications so that you can receive important weather alerts for your specific location. Some apps also send notifications for any saved locations.
- If possible, use an app, or apps, that have features like a radar you can track or lightening strike locators. These features may be available on multiple apps, but two examples include:
 - The Weatherbug app has a Spark feature that locates lightening strikes and can map strikes within the past 30 minutes and their distance from your location (example pictured).
 - The MyRadar app allows you to customize your radar and also maps locations for issued weather alerts.



Keep in mind that if inclement weather is moving into your area, the titration portion of the Dissolved Oxygen test can be completed elsewhere if needed as long as it is within the allowed four hour period. If you have any concerns about the weather or potentially being caught in storms, you should postpone monitoring to another day.

As always, it is recommended to monitor with a buddy for safety. Whether they are also a Texas Stream Team Community Scientist or not, having another person with you improves your safety. If you do choose to monitor by yourself, please let someone know where and when you are going and when you expect to be back.

Monitor Spotlight: Monitor Milestones

As 2024 draws to a close, H-GAC wants to thank all Texas Stream Team Community Scientists for the time and effort they contribute to monitoring our waterways and promoting better water quality in our region! In particular, we would like to recognize the following monitor milestones that were reached in 2024:



New & Resumed Monitors

Alicia Mein-Johnson
Barbara Whaley
Carlos Torres
Chandan Pillai
Christina Hartman
Harmon Scheller
Janean Partridge
Jari McCoy
Jerrel Geisler
Joseph Haines
Kelly Swanson
Michael Michalski
Rickie Rabourn
Ross Schkade
Rusty Hudson
Shanyn Zink
Stephanie Doolan

1 Year of Monitoring

Adriana Penabad
Angela Montoya
Ann Minnick
Heather Lambert
John Geiger
Kathy Sweezey
Kris Linberk
Sabine Blumstein
Sebastian Leyton
Steve Ellison
Tammy Leyton

2 Years of Monitoring

Gail McConnell
Harry Posey
Henry Goyette
Marty Hughes
Melissa Rodgers
Mimi Posey

5 Years of Monitoring

Bob Naegar
Regina Tippet
Rene Derewetzky

Upcoming Trainings

Texas Stream Team Standard Core Water Quality Community Science Trainings



Texas Stream Team Standard Core Water Quality Trainings

Join the Notification List:

Email stream.team@h-gac.com to be added to the notification list when a new training is scheduled.

Several trainings are planned for 2025, including a training in the Greens Bayou watershed in February or March. Please join the notification list or check the website to see when a date is set.

To view trainings held by partners across the state you can view the Meadows Center's [calendar of events](#).

Quality Control Sessions for Current Community Scientists:

As a reminder, active Texas Stream Team monitors need to complete a Quality Control Session every two years. H-GAC is working to get a more consistent schedule of opportunities that will include both QC-specific sessions for any monitor to attend, and the ability to attend the afternoon of a Standard Core training in your area. This should provide 3-4 opportunities each year to choose from.

If you want to attend a scheduled Standard Core Training for your TC Session, you must email stream.team@h-gac.com in advance.

Monitor Resources

Community Scientist Resources

The Texas Stream Team webpage includes a section for monitor resources, including downloadable manuals, cheat sheets, links to video tutorials, and instructions for submitting and viewing data. It is a great first place to check if you have

Electronic Monitoring Form Available

The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment continues to update the data forms and resources available for Texas Stream Team, and now those resources include an electronic

any questions about your Texas Stream Team monitoring.

[Visit the Website](#)

monitoring form! Just like with the PDF form, make sure to fill out all necessary fields, and mark your group as H-GAC.

[View the Form](#)

TWPD Kills & Spills

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Kills and Spill Team (KAST) investigates fish and wildlife kills resulting from pollution and natural events. To report a Kill or Spill call **(512) 389-4848**.

[Learn More](#)

Galveston Bay Action Network

The Galveston Bay Action Network allows you to be the eyes around Galveston Bay. You can report various types of pollution throughout the Galveston Bay watershed, and GBAN will help make sure it gets reported to the appropriate jurisdiction.

[Learn More](#)

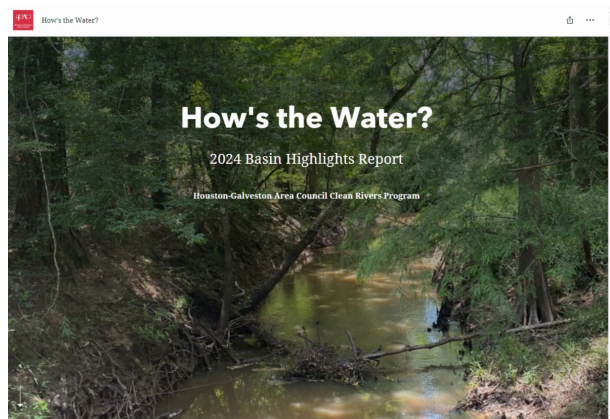
Water Quality Projects & Plans

Clean Rivers Program

2024 Basin Highlights Report

The [Basin Highlights Report](#) for 2024 is now available in PDF and interactive online formats. The Basin Highlights Reports include the status and trends of water quality in the region. Every five years a larger Basin Summary Report is produced that provides a more detailed analysis of the region's water quality. The 2024 report is a general update for H-GAC's Clean Rivers basins.

Contact Todd Running at 713-993-4549 for more information about the [Clean Rivers Program](#).



Clean Waters Initiative Workshop - Microplastics



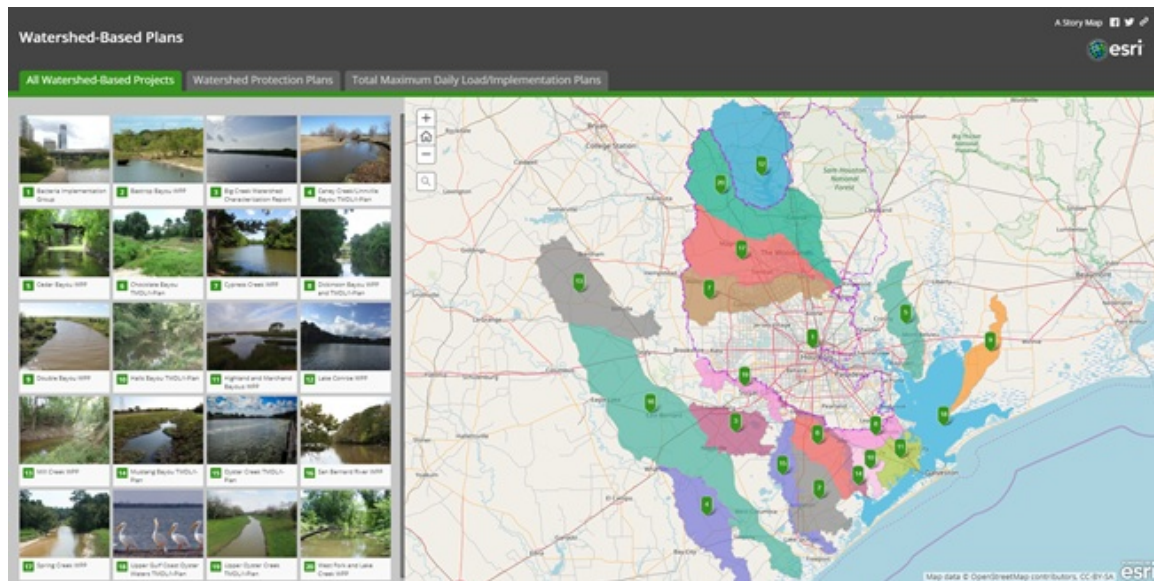
H-GAC will host a [Clean Waters Initiative workshop](#) from 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at H-GAC second floor conference rooms and on Zoom. The topic will be microplastics in surface water. Registration is requested to attend in person and

[required to attend online](#). Registration for the in person workshop will open soon.

Clean water is crucial to our region's environment, economy, and quality of life. The Clean Waters Initiative (CWI) program offers workshops that help local governments, landowners, and residents develop effective strategies to reduce pollution in area waterways.

Watershed Based Plans

H-GAC and other local partners help facilitate the development of watershed-based plans to improve water quality in the region, including both Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plans (I-Plans) and Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs). H-GAC has an interactive story map showing the locations of ongoing and completed projects in the region. If you are interested in learning more about a specific project or getting on the mailing list for stakeholder meetings, please email the contact for that project.



[View the Story Map](#)

Ongoing Project Updates

[Bacteria Implementation Group \(BIG\) watersheds](#)

Status: Watersheds throughout Harris and Montgomery Counties under implementation.

Contact: [Steven Johnston](#)

[Caney Creek/Linville Bayou watersheds](#)

Status: The TMDL was adopted by the TCEQ. The I-Plan is going through final approvals.

Contact: [Steven Johnston](#)

[Cotton Bayou](#)

[Big Creek watershed](#)

Status: The TMDL is going through TCEQ approvals. A Draft I-Plan was submitted to TCEQ and stakeholder review is requested.

Contact: [Steven Johnston](#)

[Chocolate Bay watershed](#)

Status: The Chocolate Bayou TMDL is going through final approvals. H-GAC is working with stakeholders to draft the Chocolate Bay I-Plan.

Contact: [Steven Johnston](#)

[East Fork San Jacinto River watershed](#)

Status: The TMDL and I-Plan have been reviewed by stakeholders and submitted to TCEQ. An addendum to the original TMDL is being developed.

Contact: [Cornell Evans Jr.](#)

Status: The WPP draft is being finalized after the public comment period.

Contact: [Rachel Windham](#)

[Galveston Bay Coalition of Watersheds](#)

Status: Texas Community Watershed Partners, part of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, coordinate WPP implementation efforts in Bastrop, Dickinson, Highland, and Jarbo Bayou watersheds

Contact: [Celina Lowry](#)

[Greens Bayou watershed](#)

Status: H-GAC began meeting with stakeholders in December 2024 to begin development of a WPP.

Contact: [Rachel Windham](#)

Upcoming Meeting: February 2025

[Oyster Creek watershed](#)

Status: The TMDL is going through TCEQ approvals. The draft I-Plan was submitted to TCEQ and stakeholder review is requested.

Contact: [Steven Johnston](#)

[West Lake Houston Basin Implementation](#)

Status: H-GAC is working with local stakeholders to implement strategies in the EPA accepted watershed protection plans for West Fork San Jacinto River and Lake Creek, Cypress Creek, and Spring Creek.

Contact: [Rachel Windham](#)

Partner News

Save the Date for Trash Bash

The River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash®, Texas's largest single-day waterway cleanup, invites volunteers to the 31st annual event on Saturday, March 29, 2025. Join the thousands of volunteers who attend each year to help cleanup waterways all throughout the Galveston Bay watershed. Cleanup supplies, event t-shirts, and lunch are provided to all volunteers, so bring your family and friends and come "Clean it like you mean it!". Find more information at www.trashbash.org.



Get More Involved With Partners

[Adopt-a-Beach](#)
[Artist Boat](#)
[Bayou Land Conservancy](#)
[Bayou Preservation Association](#)
[Buffalo Bayou Partnership](#)
[Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition](#)
[Exploration Green Conservancy](#)
[Friends of the River San Bernard](#)
[Galveston Bay Estuary Program](#)

[Galveston Bay Foundation](#)
[Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center](#)
[Keep Texas Beautiful](#)
[River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash](#)
[SPLASH](#)
[Trash Free Texas](#)
[Turtle Island Restoration Network](#)
[The Woodlands Township](#)
[White Oak Bayou Association](#)

About the Newsletter

Newsletter Content Survey: Looking for different content? Complete this [3-question survey](#) to let us know what you would like to see in the newsletter.

Email stream.team@h-gac.com or call 713-993-2469 with questions, comments, or suggestions. You can also [view previous issues of our newsletter](#).

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Houston-Galveston Area Council

Stream.Team@h-gac.com

www.H-GAC.com

Houston-Galveston Area Council | 3555 Timmons Lane Suite 120 | Houston, TX 77027 US

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