



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 1: May 2024

Monitor's Corner

Skills Check: Testing Order and Time



When conducting your tests for the Standard Core parameters, it is important to start the tests as soon as possible after bucket collection, and close to the sample location. Remember that temperature impacts each of the other parameters, and a small amount of water in a bucket is going to warm up much faster than the bayou or creek you are sampling. In addition, the dissolved oxygen of the bucket sample is going to change faster than the waterway as the bucket is subjected to aeration from movement while walking

and deposition of oxygen from the atmosphere. These considerations are even more important in times of extreme temperature changes like cold snaps in the winter and our very hot summers.

Testing Order can help

Following the order of tests on the laminated field guide can help to keep your bucket sample more accurate and representative of the waterway. Some examples of this include:

- By taking your secchi disk reading before your total depth reading you can use the water line on the disk to help get a more accurate result which would not be possible if you took the deeper total depth reading first;
- As noted above, the water in the bucket will warm up much faster than the water in the stream, so taking that water temperature first keeps the reading closest to the sampled waterway temperature;
- Collecting and "fixing" your dissolved oxygen samples immediately after your water temperature reduces aeration of the bucket sample from the other tests and keeps the time for possible addition of oxygen from the air to a minimum.

Safety Considerations

If you sample at a busy bridge or somewhere that you cannot immediately start the tests, it is important to make sure you have somewhere close by to safely conduct the tests so you are not walking too far or waiting too long to begin. In most cases, testing should be conducted on the banks or pier at the sample location or at a nearby safe location like a vehicle or table a short walk away.

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

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: Critter Caution

With the weather getting warmer, and with recent flooding events, you might be seeing more of the critters that call our waterways home. Among those critters are some that not everyone appreciates seeing, including alligators and snakes.

These critters live in and along our local waterways, and their presence is not a safety concern on its own. However, it is important to be aware of what factors might make them a concern, such as snakes that are venomous or alligators protecting their nests.

Suggestions for critter safety:

- Use physical or online guides to familiarize yourself with different snakes you might encounter in the area so you can more easily tell the difference between venomous snakes like a cottonmouth and common water snakes.
- Do not walk in high grass or reach your hand anywhere you cannot see.
- Wear long pants and closed-toed shoes.
- If you see really young alligators in a nest or grouped together, leave the area as the mother is likely nearby and will defend the young.
- Be aware of your surroundings and observe the banks or waterline before you walk down to your site. This is the best way to make sure you see critters ahead of time and do not get too close.



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: Regina Tippet

MONITOR SPOTLIGHT

REGINA TIPPETT

Texas Stream Team Community
Scientist since: 2019

Monitoring Site:
Chocolat Bayou @ Albert Finkle Park
&
San Bernard River @ Hanson County Park



Regina Tippett is a retired healthcare and energy accountant who discovered the Texas Master Naturalist program in 2018. It turned out to be the perfect fit with her lifelong interest in ecology and the environment. She is particularly interested in human created pollution and its effects on ecosystems. This prompted her in 2019 to join the Texas Stream Team to help monitor water quality in Chocolate Bayou and the San Bernard River. When not testing water, Regina enjoys birding, gardening with native plants to support native insects and wildlife and tending her mini backyard pond that was installed for the dragonflies. Regina is currently Treasurer of The Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges, which supports the Brazoria National Wildlife and San Bernard National Wildlife Refuges.

Regina shared some of her monitoring experience with the Texas Stream Team as part of a "Water Wednesdays" webinar this month discussing the program and hosted by Texas AgriLife Extension. The webinar can be viewed on [YouTube](#).

Upcoming Trainings

Texas Stream Team Standard Core Water Quality Trainings

Texas Stream Team Standard Core Water Quality Community Science Trainings



Standard Core Water Quality Trainings:

Friday, June 28, 2024, 9:00am-4:00pm

San Jacinto River Authority, Conroe, Texas

Limit 10 people. [Visit the H-GAC website to register.](#)

H-GAC also plans to hold another in the late fall. Please check the website or join the notification list.

Join the Notification List:

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

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 QC 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

Electronic Monitoring Form Available

The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment continues to update the data forms and resources available for Texas

submitting and viewing data. It is a great first place to check if you have any questions about your Texas Stream Team monitoring.

[Visit the Website](#)

Stream Team, and now those resources include an electronic 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.

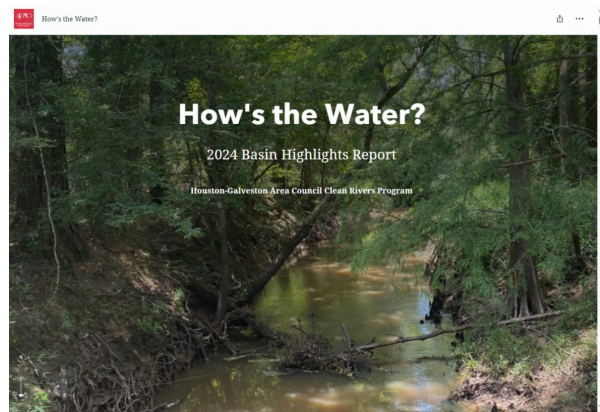
[Learn More](#)

Water Quality Projects & Plans

Clean Rivers Program

2024 Basin Highlights Report to be released soon

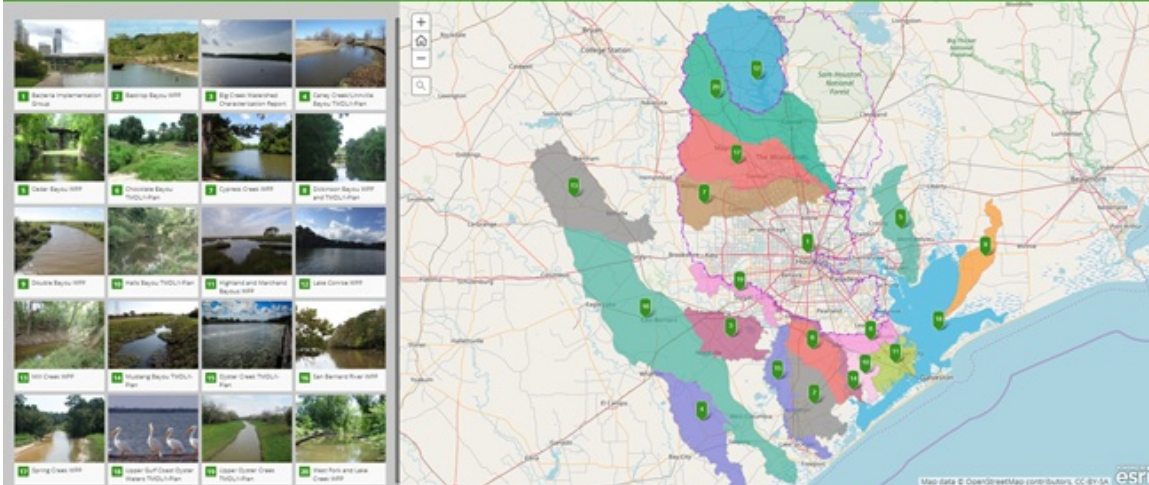
The [Basin Highlights Report](#) for 2024 is in its final stages of review and should be available soon in both an online interactive format and a PDF format. The Basin Highlights Reports include the status and trends of water quality in the region. Every five years a larger Basin Summary Report is produced that provides a more detailed analysis of the region's water quality.



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

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](#)

Upcoming Meeting: June 11, 2024

[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](#)

Upcoming Meeting: To be determined

[Caney Creek/Linville Bayou watersheds](#)

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

Contact: [Steven Johnston](#)

Upcoming: Spring 2024

[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](#)

Upcoming Meeting: To be determined

[Clear Creek watershed](#)

Status: H-GAC has developed a watershed protection plan with local stakeholders to submit to TCEQ for review in the fall.

Contact: [Rachel Windham](#)

[Cotton Bayou](#)

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

Contact: [Rachel Windham](#)

Upcoming Meeting: To be determined

[East Fork San Jacinto River watershed](#)

[Oyster Creek watershed](#)

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

Contact: [Rachel Windham](#)

Upcoming Meeting: To be determined

[Upper Oyster Creek watershed](#)

Status: Watershed in implementation phase.

Contact: [Steven Johnston](#)

Upcoming Meeting: To be determined

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

Contact: [Steven Johnston](#)

Upcoming Meeting: To be determined

[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

Texas Watershed Stewards Workshops in the Houston area

The Texas Watershed Steward program is a statewide one-day educational program designed to improve the quality of Texas' water resources by educating and informing local stakeholders about their watershed, potential impairments, and steps that can be taken to help improve and protect water quality in their watershed.

The workshops are free, but registration is required. Two workshops are scheduled for the Houston area this summer. A workshop will be held in Cleveland on June 11, and in Houston on July 25. [Learn more and register.](#)

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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