

# The Ranch Review

www.riataranch.net

April 2015

Volume 9, Issue 4

A Newsletter for Riata Ranch Residents

## UNDERSTANDING WATER QUALITY FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS WHERE YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

*Submitted by David Renniger*

**Question:** What is the most common pollutant in the urban waterways of Harris County, Texas? (Answer below)

### WATERSHEDS AND WATER QUALITY

Water quality describes physical and chemical parameters of surface water that impact both human and ecological health within a given watershed. A watershed is a geographic area where flowing water (and everything we put in it) drains into a larger common body of water. It can be the gutter system around your house that flows to the storm sewer, or an entire river basin that collects runoff from surrounding towns, roadways, and green spaces. Everyone lives in watershed. In Texas alone, there are 23 major river basin watersheds, each ultimately flowing into the Gulf of Mexico.

Understanding the relationship between water quality and human activity is the cornerstone of my own transformative experience in becoming NatureSmart. You see, I spent the majority of my career liberally applying pesticides and chemical control products to keep my demanding landscape clients happy and their gardens as green and pest-free as possible. Little did I know that most of these chemicals would eventually find their way into watersheds where they negatively affect everything from contact recreation and fishing areas, stream ecology, human health, and the safety of our drinking water.

### IMPROVING WATER QUALITY

Water quality is determined by comparing levels of pollutants like sediment, nutrients, bacteria, and man-made chemicals against baseline levels in a watershed. While this monitoring activity is performed by regulatory agencies and trained experts, here are four areas where you can make a significant contribution to improving water quality in your watershed:

#### 1. Landscapes

- Choose sustainable landscape practices
- Minimize exposed soil with vegetative cover
- Plant vegetative barriers to filter runoff and trap sediments
- Mulch lawn clippings
- Stop using pesticides and chemical fertilizers

#### 2. Car Care

- Regularly check for fluid leaks
- Recycle used motor oil
- Wash vehicles at the car wash and not in the driveway

#### 3. Paved Surfaces

- Sweep/blow driveways, sidewalks and roads
- Don't sweep/blow debris into storm drains
- Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces

#### 4. Home Care

- Never pour anything down storm drains
- Carefully store and dispose of cleaners, chemicals, and oil
- Pick up pet waste
- Pump and inspect septic systems regularly

Unfortunately, most major streams in Harris County, Texas are listed on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's 303(d) list, which identifies impaired waters with higher than acceptable values for pollutants. The good news is that implementing the recommendations in these four areas of focus can make a difference and cost nothing more than a simple change in behavior.

**The answer to our question:** E.coli bacteria from fecal contamination is the number one cause of impaired waterways in Harris County, Texas. The bacteria is carried by stormwater runoff that flows into our creeks and streams. You can make an immediate impact by cleaning up pet waste and not allowing them to defecate near stormwater drainage areas.

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

### EMERGENCY

Sheriff.....	713-221-6000
Fire Department.....	281-855-1110
Cy-Fair Medical Center.....	281-890-4285
Memorial City Hospital.....	713-932-3000
Poison Control.....	800-222-1222

### SCHOOLS

Cypress Fairbanks ISD.....	281-897-4000
Postma Elementary.....	281-345-3660
Rennell Elementary.....	281-213-1550
Spillane Middle.....	281-216-1645
Cy-Fair High.....	281-897-4600
Cy-Falls High.....	281-856-1000
Cy-Woods High.....	281-213-1800
Cy-Fair College.....	281-290-3200

### UTILITIES

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Comcast Cable/High Speed Internet.....	713-341-1000
Waste Mgt.....	713-686-6666
HOA, SCS Mgt.....	281-463-1777
United States Post Office.....	800-275-8777

### LIBRARY

Cy-Fair College Library.....	281-290-3210
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## NEWSLETTER INFO

### NEWSLETTER

Articles.....	riataranch@peelinc.com
Peel, Inc.....	888-687-6444
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### ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Do you have an idea or suggestion for the newsletter? Want to submit a photo, article, or both? It's easy!! Email your articles to [riataranch@peelinc.com](mailto:riataranch@peelinc.com) by the 10th of the preceding month. So if you get your ideas in before the deadline, you should see them in the very next month's newsletter.

We are glad to hear all of the positive feedback and we intend to continue to improving the look and feel of the newsletter according to what you tell us. So get as involved as you like! We look forward to hearing from you.



## Cypress-Tomball Democrats April Meeting

The next Cypress-Tomball Democrats monthly meeting will be on Tuesday, April 21, 2015. It will be held at Rudy's Grill & Cantina, 11760 Grant Rd., Cypress, TX 77429, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the meeting and to join this growing club, which meets on the third Tuesday of every month. The meetings are open to all, and always feature great fellowship and informative guest speakers. For more information, visit the website at [www.cytomdems.com](http://www.cytomdems.com); contact Glenn Etienne at [cytomdems@yahoo.com](mailto:cytomdems@yahoo.com); or "Like" the club on Facebook.



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# Are your weeds blooming?

What is a weed? A weed is any plant or flower in your yard or garden that you didn't intentionally plant. Early spring is the time of year that weeds begin to pop-up in your yard. Here are a few tips to help combat these pesky weeds.

Mowing your yard on a regular schedule will help keep the weeds from growing to a stage that they can germinate. Adjust your lawn mower height to the second highest setting. The taller grass will block sunlight from any seeds the weeds spread.

A weed and feed product will help control the weeds and encourage your grass to grow. However, most weed killer products only are effective when the weed is just beginning to grow. The advantage to using these products is to create a healthier lawn that is capable of keeping weeds away. Be sure to follow the directions for application.

One of the best solutions for attacking the weeds is to pull them by hand. Be sure to pull the root of the weed out of the ground. Throw away the weeds in your trash can. Do not use them as compost or allow them to blow-away, doing so will allow any seeds to re-populate your yard or your neighbors!



  
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## Northwest Harris County Aggie Moms to Award Scholarships

Please join us for the Northwest Harris County Aggie Mom's Club monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2015, beginning with refreshments and social time at 6:30 followed by meeting at 7:15 p.m. The meeting is held at the Houston Distributing Company, 7100 High Life Drive, conveniently located near Willowbrook Mall at the intersection of High Life Drive and Cutten Road. You will want to find out which deserving students will be awarded the 2015 scholarship awards and learn how these scholarships impact the Aggie experience. NWHC Aggie Moms Club members will also vote on which Texas A&M student organizations they would like the club to support. All meetings are open to the public and prospective students; current students and Aggie families are always welcome!

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Parents Weekend- April 17-18th-Parents' Weekend is a cherished Aggie tradition honoring Aggie moms and dads since 1919. Among the many weekend activities is the popular Aggie Moms' Boutique, a gift and craft fair held on April 17 and 18 in the Memorial Student Center at Texas A&M. Check out our booth! We will be selling our Tradition beads! For more information on the scheduled parents weekend events go to <http://parentsweekend.tamu.edu/node/38>.

Aggie Muster-April 21st- Aggies around the world will join together for Muster, held at Reed Arena beginning at 7PM to honor Aggies who are no longer among us. Muster is a day celebrating the camaraderie and the friendships, the triumphs and the defeats, the legacies and the impact that Texas A&M University has made, and continues to make, in all of our lives.

The Northwest Harris County Aggie Mom's Club meets August thru May on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:15 pm at 7100 High Life Drive. For more information on monthly speakers or upcoming events visit our website at [www.nwhcaggiemoms.org](http://www.nwhcaggiemoms.org) or contact Connie Pritchard, Club President at [pritchardg@sbcbglobal.net](mailto:pritchardg@sbcbglobal.net)

## Albion Hurricanes FC Soccer Evaluations & Tryouts

Albion Hurricanes FC (AHFC), established in 1989, is leading the way in South Texas youth soccer by inspiring and developing young men and women through world class coaching and innovative techniques, as well as instilling the proper framework, self-esteem, confidence and sportsmanship within our athletes.

Players will be evaluated to determine their technical and tactical abilities by the highly-qualified staff at AHFC. AHFC is proud to offer you various locations in the greater Houston area. Please visit [www.albionhurricanes.org](http://www.albionhurricanes.org) for specific times and dates and to pre-register for our Evaluations & Tryouts.

AHFC office: 713-939-7473

Website: [www.albionhurricanes.org](http://www.albionhurricanes.org)

Questions? Boys: Mark Rufo at [mrufo@albionhurricanes.org](mailto:mrufo@albionhurricanes.org) or call 979-453-1933

Girls: Danny Hill at [dhill@albionhurricanes.org](mailto:dhill@albionhurricanes.org) or call 713-818-7529

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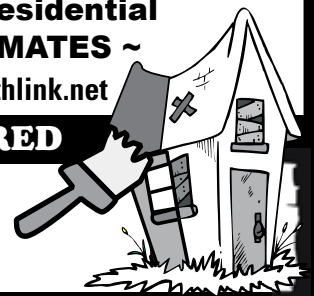
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# Portable Fire Extinguishers



A portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives; but portable extinguishers have limitations. Because fire grows and spreads so rapidly, the number one priority for residents is to get out safely.

Use a portable fire extinguisher when the fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket, and is not growing; everyone has exited the building; the fire department has been called or is being called; and the room is not filled with smoke.

To operate a fire extinguisher, remember the word PASS:

- **PULL** the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you, and release the locking mechanism.
- **AIM** low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- **SQUEEZE** the lever slowly and evenly.
- **SWEEP** the nozzle from side-to-side.

For the home, select a multi-purpose extinguisher (can be used on all types of home fires) that is large enough to put out a small fire, but not so heavy as to be difficult to handle.

Choose a fire extinguisher that carries the label of an independent testing laboratory.

Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out.

Install fire extinguishers close to an exit and keep your back to a clear exit when you use the device so you can make an easy escape if the fire cannot be controlled. If the room fills with smoke, leave immediately.

Know when to go. Fire extinguishers are one element of a fire response plan, but the primary element is safe escape. Every household should have a home fire escape plan and working smoke alarms.

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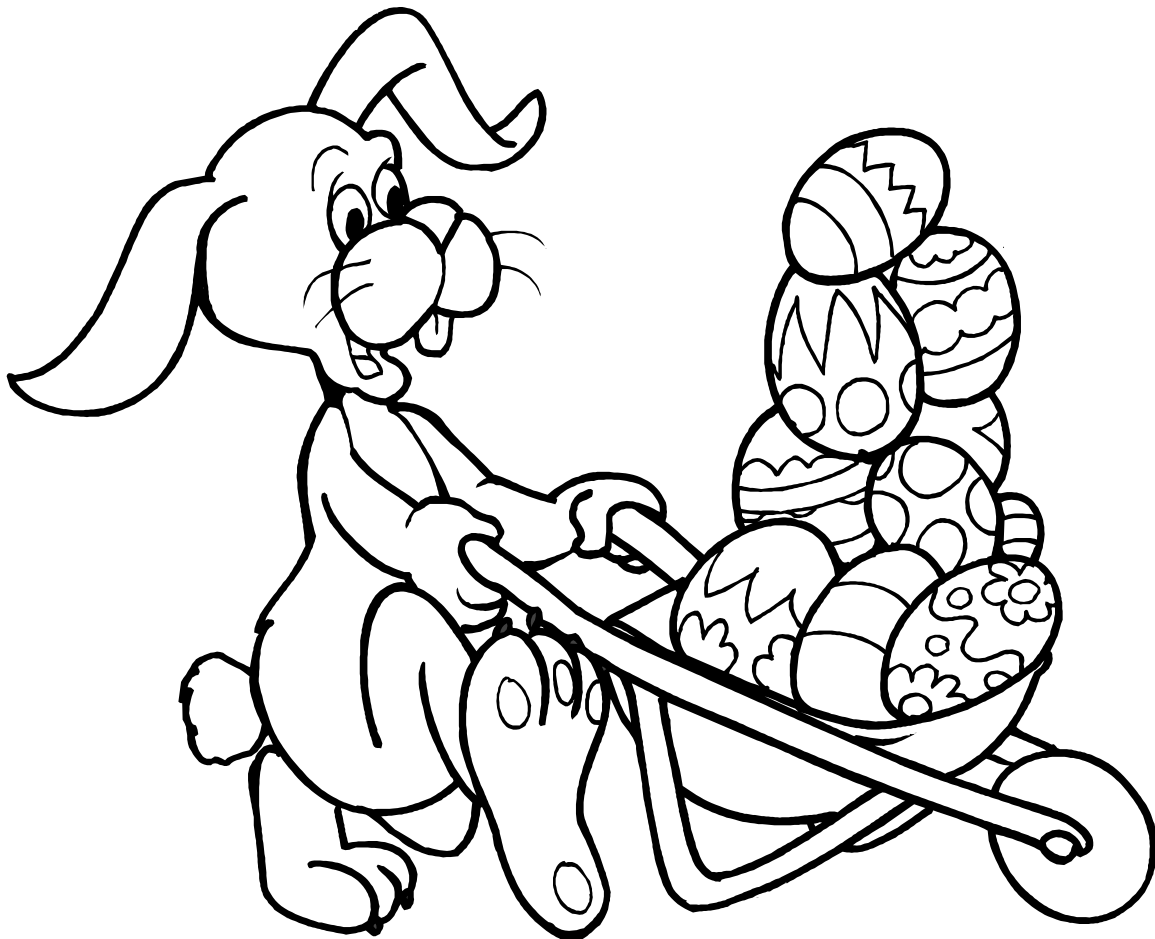
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