

Woodwind Lakes



It's all right here

April 2015

Volume 4, Issue 4

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.

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Please support the advertisers that make the *Woodwind Lakes Newsletter* possible. If you are interested in advertising, please contact our sales office at 1-888-687-6444 or advertising@peelinc.com. The advertising deadline is the 8th of the month prior to the issue.

ARTICLE INFO

The *Woodwind Lakes Newsletter* is mailed monthly to all Woodwind Lakes residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to submit information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for consideration please email it to stephen@sterlingasi.com. The deadline is the 9th of the month prior to the issue.

2015 DATES TO REMEMBER

FRIDAY, APRIL 3
Good Friday

SATURDAY, APRIL 4
Woodwind Lakes Garage sale

SUNDAY, APRIL 5
Easter Sunday

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22
Earth day

Woodwind Lakes Grounds Committee

We meet monthly on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Windfern MUD Bldg. in the conference room at Gessner @ Mauna Loa. Please join us and contribute to your community. We hope to see you at our February 10th Meeting.

Plants

If you have any healthy plants that you no longer want for any reason please let us know. We may be able to use them on our common grounds.

Doggie Poop Bags

If you are trying to pull out a doggie poop bag from the dispenser and it will not tear easily please inform Sterling Management, 832-678-4500 or servicedesk@sterlingasi.com. of the problem and the location.

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Price shop hotels online, but then call the front desk. You may get a better deal.



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 or contact Connie Pritchard, Club President at pritchardg@sbcglobal.net

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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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GET MORE FROM YOUR GARDEN

Raspberries require little care to grow, but can cost a lot at the store. You can even freeze them.

Mixed salad greens, like baby lettuce and arugula are tough and quick growing, even after cutting.

If you cut them correctly they will grow again. Start at one end of your garden and cut plants about an inch from the ground. The plant could grow back 3-4 times in a season.

Flat gardening was popular years ago, but now raised beds are much better. They prevent weeds from taking over, let water drain more efficiently and plants thrive in aerated soil.

A very common error in gardening is over watering and drowning plants. If it rains at least one inch per week, you can probably skip heavy watering. Purchase a rain gauge (under \$10) at garden stores to keep track of how much or how little water your plant is getting and add or subtract from there.

An advertisement for Texas Direct Auto. It features a golden retriever puppy wearing a grey baseball cap with a Texas state flag logo. The puppy is sitting next to a plate of hot dogs and a baseball. The word "Hot Dog" is written in large, stylized, orange-outlined letters. In the bottom left corner, there is a cartoon mascot of a blue and yellow bird-like creature. The bottom of the ad has a blue banner with white and yellow text.

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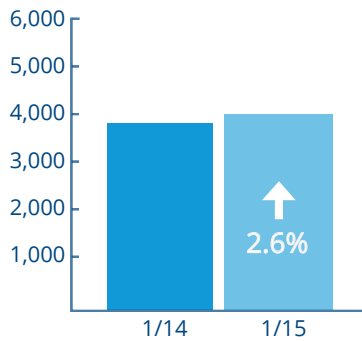
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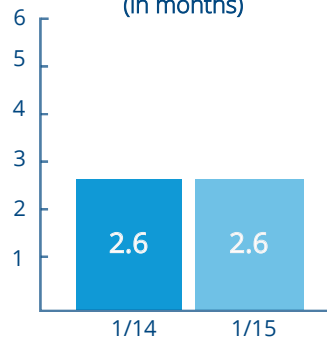
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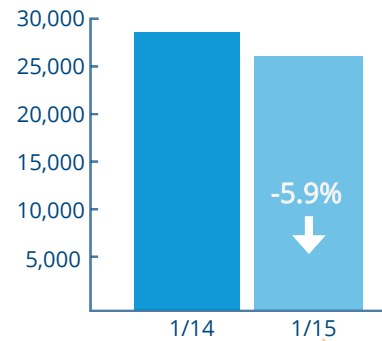
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