

Private water well screenings and education program set August 11-12th in Falls City.

Residents of Wilson and Karnes Counties are invited to water well screenings, soil sampling collection and education meetings.

The [Texas Well Owner Network](#), TWON, and the [Lone Star Healthy Streams](#), LSHS, are hosting an upcoming event on August 11-12th. This series is a whole watershed approach that allows residents to have their private well water screened, and/or soil samples tested, as well as provide education training for groundwater and surface water protection. This event is hosted by [Cibolo Creek](#) Watershed Protection Plan. It is open to the public and free to attend, lunch is provided.

Joel Pigg, [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) program specialist, College Station, said the Texas Well Owner Network program is for Texas residents who depend on household wells for their water needs. While the Lone Star Healthy Streams education component “aims to increase awareness of surface water pollution originating from livestock, wildlife, and feral hogs and encourage implementation of proven best management practices”, Leanne Wiley, LSHS program specialist.

The partnership of TWON and LSHS produces a whole watershed education opportunity. “The TWON program was established to help well owners become familiar with Texas groundwater resources, septic system maintenance, well maintenance and construction, and water quality and treatment,” he said. While LSHS reviews surface water quality, resources, and land management recommendations.

Water samples will be screened for contaminants, including total coliform bacteria, *E. coli*, nitrate-nitrogen, arsenic and salinity. Soil samples will be submitted for a routine analysis, the base testing for fertilizer recommendations.

Water sampling and meeting information

August 11th, water and soil samples can be dropped off from 8:30-10:30 a.m. at the respective counties AgriLife offices: Karnes County AgriLife [210 W Calvert Ave, Suite 160, Karnes County, TX 78118](#); Wilson County AgriLife [1420 3rd Street Floresville, TX 78114](#). Soil samples can also be brought the education meeting on August 12th.

Three Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education credits for pesticide applicators are available for one General and two Integrated Pest Management.

The results and education meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 12th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Falls City Community Hall (306 South Front Street Falls City, TX 78117). Lunch is provided for all attendees, sponsored by Lyssy and Eckel Feeds. Please **RSVP by August 8th to Wilson or Karnes County AgriLife Office by calling Wilson [830.393.7357](#) or Karnes [830.780.3906](#)**

Sampling instructions

Please use a new bottle of water (12-20 ounces), pour out the contents and fill it with a water sample from your private water well. Take the sample from the spigot/hose bib nearest to the well head. Remove the water hose if there is one and take directly from the spigot/hose bib. If an inside faucet is used, you will need to remove the aerator on faucet before making the collection. Rinse and dry the

exterior of the faucet to prevent exterior contamination of your water sample. If possible, wipe off with a Clorox-type towelette or paper towel wetted with a light bleach solution to kill any bacteria present on the faucet. **Allow the solution to dry before sampling.** Turn on the water full force and let it run at full force for two minutes or until you hear the pump start running. Reduce the water flow to a small stream.

Refrigerate the sample and transport it to the workshop (in an ice chest) as soon after collection as possible. It is best to collect the day of the workshop if that is possible otherwise make sure the sample is kept cool and out of direct sunlight. Sample should be collected within 24 hours before the workshop to ensure accurate results.

We encourage you to bring samples from all wells on your property; many participants that have water treatment equipment take samples before and after treatment to make sure the equipment is functioning properly. Also we need for you to label the sample with your name (if you bring more than one sample you also need to label the sample in some way to make sure you know which well the sample comes from). We will be screening for Nitrates, TDS (salinity) and bacteria (absence or presence of coliform and E. coli) with your sample.

There will be a \$15 per sample charge for this water well screening and you may bring as many samples as you would like.

Pigg said it is essential for those submitting samples to be at the follow-up meeting to receive results, learn corrective measures for identified problems and improve their understanding of private well management.

[Water contaminants concerns](#)

Pigg said research shows the presence of E. coli bacteria in water indicates that waste from humans or warm-blooded animals may have contaminated the water. Water contaminated with E. coli is more likely to also have pathogens that can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea or other symptoms.

The presence of nitrate-nitrogen in well water is also a concern, and water with nitrate-nitrogen at levels of 10 parts per million is considered unsafe for human consumption, he said.

“These nitrate levels above 10 parts per million can disrupt the ability of blood to carry oxygen throughout the body, resulting in a condition called methemoglobinemia,” Pigg said. “Infants less than 6 months of age are most susceptible to this.”

Salinity, as measured by total dissolved solids, will also be determined for each sample, he said. Water with high levels may leave deposits and have a salty taste. Using water with high levels for irrigation may damage soil or plants.

To learn more about the programs offered through the network or to find additional publications and resources, visit twon.tamu.edu and lshs.tamu.edu For more information on the water screening contact Pigg at 979-321-5946 or j-pigg@tamu.edu.

The screenings are presented by AgriLife Extension and [Texas Water Resources Institute](#), TWRI.

Funding for TWON and LSHS are through a Clean Water Act Section 319(h) nonpoint source grant provided by the [Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board](#) and the [U.S. Environmental Protection](#)

Agency. The project is managed by TWRI, part of [Texas A&M AgriLife Research](#), AgriLife Extension and the [Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#).

For more information specific to the workshop, contact Karnes or Wilson County AgriLife offices; Pigg at 979-321-5946 or j-pigg@tamu.edu; Leanne Wiley at 979-321-5950 or leanne.wiley@ag.tamu.edu; Mary-Michael Zahed, Watershed Coordinator for Cibolo Creek at 804-350-5594 or mary.lipfordzahed@ag.tamu.edu