

Cypress Creek Project

Stakeholder discussion forum, Monday July 28, 2008

How do you Define Water Quality?

- Can't separate from quantity
- Not a lot of sediment to stir up
- Aquatic species healthy and productive
- Aquatic species assessment healthy = balanced
- The Chatterbox orchid is a rare species that need a healthy creek to survive, (indicator species)
- Eutrophication (species plugging up creek, trap sediment)
- Pharmaceuticals
- Septic Systems
- Erosion

How do you define good water quantity?

- Not good when Jacob's Well stops flowing
- Good has enough flow for healthy and productive ecosystem (habitat, quality, quantity, function)
- Kids can swim with no ear infections
- Cypress roots not exposed
- Cypress will not survive without water for one 6 month period or 2 years of 3-month periods
- Not a lot of sediment to stir up
- Water wells and creeks flowing
- Sufficient floods
- Treated water should not be exported out of watershed

How healthy was the Creek in the Past?

- People used to walk the hills and play in streams
- Lots of deer, undisturbed wildlife
- Could (sometimes) see every pebble at the bottom of Blue Hole (~60 years ago)
- Jacob's Well's water was very clear
- Jacob's Well had a head and you could hear it gurgling for miles
- 10 years ago the health was marginal
- 8 years ago (2000) health was disastrous.

How Healthy is the Creek in the Present?

- Woodcreek has increased pesticides in creek
- People move to the watershed because it's beautiful, but then it gets too crowded
- Younger generation does not have the same value for the land
- Fragmentation of old ranch lands
- Distinguish Upper Cypress from Lower:
 - Jacobs Well to RR12 = degraded for at least 14 years,
 - Below RR12 Blue hole has had improved health in the last 5 years, although you cannot see the bottom as clearly
- During a rain, above RR12 crossing, the creek is clear. Below RR12 it looks like chocolate milk.
- Sediment coming from caliche roads on construction sites is clogging up recharge features
- Poor
- Degraded
- Overused
- Dirty
- Impaired

How Healthy will the Creek be in the Future?

- Wonderful (if we succeed in this project)
- Abysmal

Who has the greatest impact on the Creek?

- Public Water Supply
- Constituents
- Developers
 - Lobbying for favorable legislation
- Legislators
 - Lack of action
 - Laws not specific/not effective
 - Need clean elections
- Tourists
- County authorities
 - Lack of control over land

Who should be responsible for the health of the watershed?

- Everybody (responsible as homeowners)
- Citizens/constituents – active in making government aware
- Various levels of government (municipal, county, state)
- Organizations
- Land developers (subject to regulations)
- Stewards/advocates

- Tendency to blame others

What are the most important environmental issues? (a vote shows priority in the group)

- 1. Lack of land use controls 2.5
- 2. Lack of political will (\$ trumps logic) 2
- 3. Lack of water 1.5
- 4. Overpopulation 1
- Water use 0
- Increased use of rainwater collection needed 0

General Notes and suggestions

- Has anyone tracked frogs? Indicator species
- Chad Norris has developed an aquatic species assessment. He said that there are only 2-3 spring runs in Texas and that Jacob's Well and Cypress Creek are very rare.
- Deer Creek nursing home is point source of effluent spray
- Woodcreek North (soon to be Wimberley Springs), with 3000 lots platted on about 1500 acres is owned by the largest water company in the US, Aqua USA. They included a centralized water and sewage system.
- Johnson family has collected books and photos related to the subject
- Our project should give awards to good watershed stewards (such as Tim Thompson who runs the garden center and makes sure there are fertilizers there that are appropriate for our soils and water system) or give examples of good stewards and what you can do (such as Diane Wassenich and the San Marcos River Foundation)
- Education on website
- Envision Central Texas vision for Wimberley posted on website
- Statistics of population growth in watershed posted on website
- Reference manuals/project work in local libraries
- Steward's toolkit
- Dissemination strategy for this information – consolidated distribution for various groups