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**From Planning to Producing: The Plum Creek Watershed**

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Abstract:

Plum Creek is a 52-mile stream that arises from rapidly urbanizing headwaters and passes through a rural agriculture-dominated downstream landscape before its confluence with the San Marcos River, which drains into the Guadalupe River, one of the most popular water bodies used for recreation in Texas. Along the course of Plum Creek, there are impairments by E. coli bacteria in urban and rural portions of the stream as well as various nutrient concerns along its entire length. Within this context and on a fast-track of development, the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan was completed in less than two years. Such a quick conclusion to plan writing requires readily available data, constant public outreach, much legwork beforehand, a tremendous commitment on the part of an involved steering committee, and a great deal of adaptability. This project benefited from a high level of participation and cooperation with local municipalities and counties, the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), and many other entities. Though the added focus and energy of being a priority watershed selected by the EPA, TSSWCB, and TCEQ were a great resource, this also resulted in high expectations for the success of the plan.

Impact Statement:

Many of the approaches taken through phases of plan development and implementation have been based on assumptions of demographics, science, social behavior, politics, economics, and countless other factors. Being proactive has required a great deal of flexibility but has also resulted in large rewards. We detail some of the lessons learned through the rapid pace of plan development and a just as rapid transition to implementation.

The Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan has drawn a great deal of attention at the local and state levels, resulting in unanticipated cooperation with outside entities. The process has led to the discovery of both gaps and bridges in the philosophy of watershed planning, and we hope to push the process forward toward water quality success.

Category: Watershed Assessment and Restoration

Type of Presentation: Poster Presentation