



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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UGRA Recognizes Summer Study Volunteers

UGRA hosted an appreciation luncheon on October 27th to recognize the 2022 Volunteer Summer Study participants. This summer, UGRA was assisted by 30 volunteers who collected 342 samples at 42 locations throughout Kerr County during June - August. UGRA staff provided a summary presentation including *E. coli* bacteria test results for each of the sampling locations and an overview of the laboratory testing procedure. Overall, the test results from summer 2022 showed low *E. coli* bacteria concentrations. This summer our region experienced intense drought conditions which caused some creeks to go dry or only have pools with little to no flow. Waterbodies with critically low flows and abundant urban wildlife, like Town, Quinlan, Camp Meeting, and Third Creeks, exhibited the highest bacteria levels.



Pictured left to right: Matthew Wilkinson, UGRA Natural Resources Specialist; Frances Lovett; Carl Kappel; Katy Kappel; Trudy Eberhardt; Alice King; Nancy Huffman; Rosilee Winn; Sherry Wilson; Dee Elliott; Maggie Snow, UGRA Treasurer and Outreach and Education Committee Chair; Karen Taylor; Bob Taylor; Clinton Morse; and Diane McMahon, UGRA President and Volunteer.

E. coli bacteria is an indicator of water contamination and is used to assess the risk of contracting a waterborne illness while swimming. Therefore, each summer, UGRA tests *E. coli* bacteria levels at twenty-one popular swimming holes throughout Kerr County. UGRA began the Volunteer Summer Study in 2004 to expand the number of sites that are monitored routinely and to supplement water quality data collected by UGRA staff. The sites monitored by volunteers also help identify areas that may need further investigation.

“The volunteers do more than just collect a water sample and bring it to the UGRA lab. They become stewards of the river by adopting a location and giving it extra attention. Some volunteers pick up trash each week at their site while others record their observations regarding recent rainfall, presence of wildlife, or other factors that might influence water quality. They provide a valuable perspective by becoming familiar with their specific creek or stretch of river,” said Matthew Wilkinson, UGRA Natural Resources Specialist.

If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer Summer Study participant, please send your contact information to UGRA (mwilkinson@ugra.org). For more information about the program, visit www.ugra.org/major-initiatives/volunteer-summer-study

Let's Keep *Our* River Clean