



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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UGRA Recognizes Summer Study Volunteers

UGRA hosted an appreciation luncheon on October 23rd to recognize the 2024 Volunteer Summer Study participants. This summer, UGRA was assisted by 35 volunteers who collected 405 samples at 48 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. The test results from summer 2024 showed overall low *E. coli* bacteria concentrations with spikes after large rainfall events. Our region has been in an exceptional drought for the last few summers and while rains brought some reprieve this year, flows were still low throughout the county. Areas along the river with abundant urban wildlife exhibited the highest bacteria levels.



Pictured left to right: Matthew Wilkinson, UGRA Natural Resources Specialist; Palmore Baxter; Reagan Boles, UGRA Lab Analyst; Katy Kappel; Carl Kappel; Lisa Flannagan; Michael McCrea; Patricia Poore; Karen Taylor; Bob Taylor; Kathy Loring; Dee Elliot; Sherry Wilson; John Elliot; John Hornung.

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.

“Each summer, the volunteers dedicate their time to collecting samples and serving as stewards of the Guadalupe River. This year we had quite a few first-time volunteers and several volunteers who took on additional sites to provide excellent coverage of waterway health in the county. The volunteers’ observations also provide a valuable perspective because they become 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