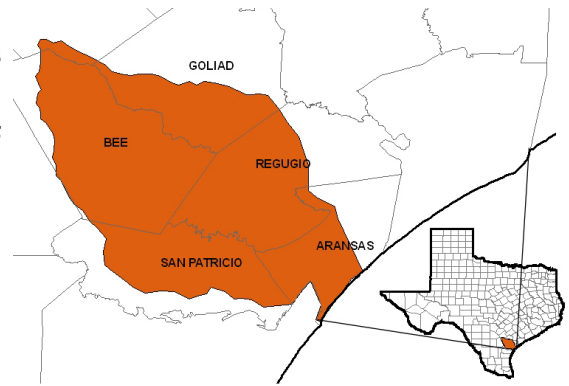


Copano Bay Water Quality Education

According to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Copano Bay on the Texas Gulf Coast is not suitable for harvesting oysters because of elevated bacteria concentrations from various sources. In addition, recreation in the tidal segments of the Mission and Aransas rivers is impaired by the bacteria, *Enterococcus*. TCEQ has initiated development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) to determine the sources of these bacteria and the measures necessary to reduce the bacteria levels in the rivers and bay.

The *Copano Bay Water Quality Education* project conducts educational programs and demonstrations for land and livestock owners, coordinating with such programs as the *Urban Rancher* program for small landowners and *Lone Star Healthy Streams* program for cattlemen. The programs and demonstrations will increase awareness of water quality issues and best management practices (BMPs) that owners can implement to decrease or prevent bacteria from entering waterways.



This project is coordinated with TCEQ's ongoing TMDL program, the implementation plan development and additional monitoring activities to provide the necessary support to these activities.

Objectives

- Improve water quality in Copano Bay and its tributaries by increasing awareness of water quality issues
- Provide education and demonstrations on BMPs to decrease or prevent bacteria from entering waterways
- Increase knowledge of BMPs for reducing bacteria runoff, which is expected to result in greater implementation of BMPs throughout the watershed

Accomplishments

- Established project website: <http://copanobay-wq.tamu.edu>
- Drafted "Horse Farm Management in the Copano Bay Watershed"

Collaborators

- Texas Water Resources Institute, Texas A&M AgriLife
- Texas AgriLife Extension Service
- Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
- Welder Wildlife Refuge

Funding Agencies

- Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

