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Water quality training May 6 will focus on Lake Tawakoni, Lake Fork, and area watersheds

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EMORY– A Texas Watershed Steward workshop on water quality and water management related to Lake Tawakoni, Lake Fork, and other area watersheds will be held from 8 a.m.-noon at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office for Rains County.

The office is located at 410 Tawakoni Drive, also known as Highway 276, in Emory.

The workshop will be presented by AgriLife Extension and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board.

The training is free and open to anyone interested in improving water quality in the region, said program coordinators. Participants are encouraged to preregister at the Texas Watershed Steward website at <http://tw.s.tamu.edu>.

The Texas Watershed Steward program is funded through a Clean Water Act nonpoint source grant from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, said Michael Kuitu, AgriLife Extension program specialist and coordinator for the Texas Watershed Steward program.

Kuitu said training will include an overview of water quality and watershed management in Texas, but will primarily focus on area water quality issues, including current and future efforts to help improve and protect local watersheds.

“There will be a discussion of watershed systems, as well as the types and sources of water pollution,” he said. “We’ll also have a discussion about ways to improve and protect water quality and the need for community-driven watershed protection and management.”

Attendees of the training will receive a copy of the Texas Watershed Steward Handbook and a certificate of completion. The program offers four continuing education units in soil and water management for certified crop advisers, four units for professional engineers and certified planners, four credits for certified teachers and two credits for nutrient management specialists. A total of four professional development hours are available for professional geoscientists licensed by the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists.

There are also three general continuing education units for Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide license holders, four for certified landscape architects and three for certified floodplain managers. Four continuing education credits are offered for each of the following Texas Commission on Environmental Quality occupational licensees: wastewater system operators, public water system operators, on-site sewage facility installers and landscape irrigators.

Kuitu said he wants to encourage local residents and other stakeholders throughout and beyond Rains, Hopkins, Wood, and Van Zandt counties to attend the workshop to become better informed about area water resources and how to protect and improve their water quality.

For more information, go to <http://tws.tamu.edu> or contact Kuitu at 979-862-4457, mkuitu@tamu.edu; Stephen Gowin in Rains County at 903-473-4580, s-gowin@tamu.edu; Mario Villarino-Gutierrez in Hopkins County at 903-885-3443, m-villarino@tamu.edu; Clint Perkins in Wood County at 903-763-2924, CTPerkins@ag.tamu.edu; or Tommy Phillips in Van Zandt County at 903-567-4149, ct-phillips@tamu.edu.