

2013 TEEA Winner Agriculture Category: Texas Water Resources Institute, Buck Creek Watershed Partnership

Phyllis Dyer, Buck Creek Watershed Coordinator, Texas Water Resources Institute

We'll kinda creep downhill because we never know what we're going to see, we've already seen turkeys.

Narrator

Texas AgriLife's Phyllis Dyer has spent the better part of a decade documenting the wildlife that depends on Buck Creek.

Phyllis Dyer

Coyotes, bobcats, we had a mountain lion out here...

Narrator

In a parched region, Buck Creek attracted so many different species that by the year 2000, the fecal matter left behind caused the creek to be added to the state's list of impaired water bodies.

Phyllis Dyer

You wouldn't want to drink it, you wouldn't want to swim in it, and heaven help you if you got a mouthful.

Narrator

The 68-mile long waterway stretches across the southeast corner of the Texas Panhandle and much of it flows through private property.

Paul DeLaune, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Environmental Soil Science, Texas A&M AgriLife Research

Basically built a trust with them, they were able to help us make decisions and they could make choices about what they wanted to do.

Kirk Skipper, Co-Owner, Skipper Ranch

If you get away from this creek two or three miles, you have a hard time finding water.

Narrator

Rancher Kirk Skipper decided to build a number of wells to draw wildlife away from the creek.

Kirk Skipper

It's not anything to see 30 or 40 turkeys watering at this tank. They're drinking other places than the creek.

Narrator

After almost a decade of effort, Buck Creek was removed from the impaired waterways list.

Burl Brim, Landowner

In the fall of 44 we moved up here.

Narrator

The wetlands 81-year-old Burl Brim sees from his porch are as clear as his childhood memories.

Burl Brim

We don't see muddy water here anymore and uh, it's wonderful.

Paul DeLaune

I think this project is key to showing the importance of stakeholder engagement.

Phyllis Dyer

When I was told we were nominated, I was deeply honored, but it's not me. The landowners are the ones who need to be applauded; they are the ones who have done the work.