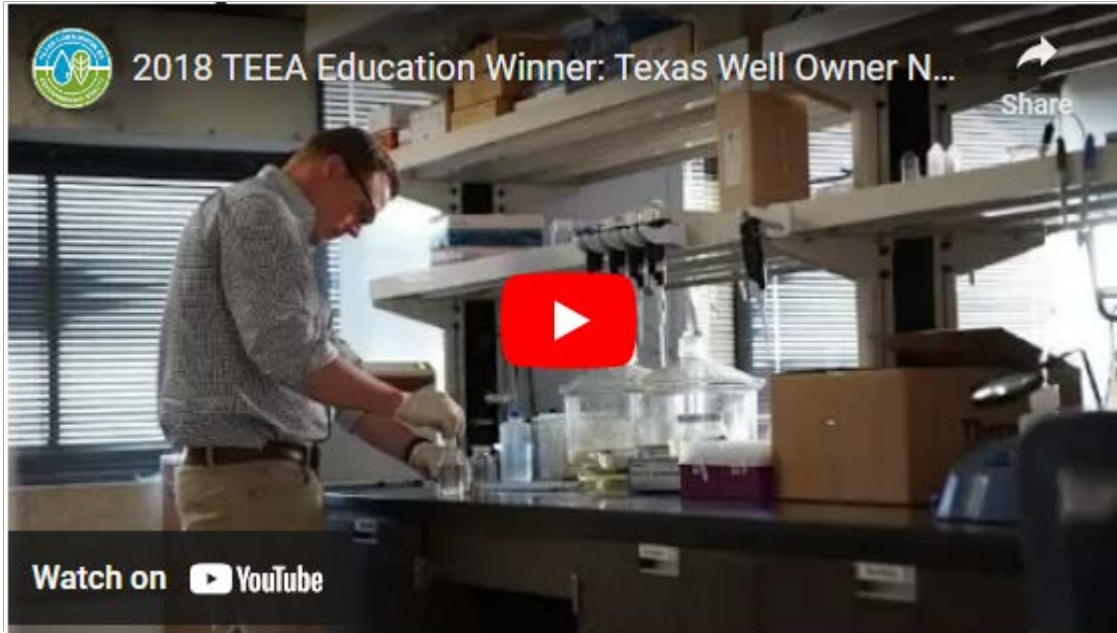


Texas Well Owner Network

TEEA 2018 Winner: Education

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; Texas Water Resources Institute



Program Gives Private Well Owners Tools to Protect Themselves and Our State's Water

Texas Well Owner Network (TWON) helps private well owners maintain safe drinking water by teaching them how to monitor and protect groundwater and surface water. The program, developed by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Texas Water Resources Institute, is designed for private well owners who depend on household wells for their water needs.

With more than one million private water wells in the state, education and training are essential for ensuring public health and safety. Unlike public drinking water sources that are monitored and regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act, private well owners are responsible for monitoring and maintaining their wells and are at a greater risk for exposure to compromised water quality.

TWON helps private well owners learn about managing their wells and protecting water quality through workshops and events across the state that cover groundwater and aquifers, well maintenance and construction, improving and protecting water resources, septic system maintenance, water quality, and water treatment.

Participants in the program can also bring in a water well sample from their well to have it screened for pollutants. Based on the screening results, TWON identifies sources of contamination, provides recommendations for remediating well contamination, and helps each well owner design best management practices (BMPs) for their site.

Since TWON's inception, 7,813 private well owners have benefited from the program's well screenings and events. By educating well owners, TWON helps prevent contamination of surface and groundwater resources while protecting the health of people who use these private wells.

Additionally, participants gain a better understanding of the relationship between practices that are in or near wells and the quality of water available for drinking and irrigation.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, TWON demonstrated what it means to be an environmental leader by providing rapid response for water well screenings. Through collaborative efforts with partners, they stepped-in to provide more than 1,200 additional test opportunities for well owners affected by the hurricane.

TWON teaches private well owners how to be good stewards of the environment by using BMPs to reduce their impact on the state's water supply and to prevent contamination of surface waters and aquifers. The program is more than just an environmental education program—it represents the importance of fostering environmental stewardship in a community to protect public health and our natural resources.