

The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment

TEEA 2019 Winner: Civic/Community

The Texas Stream Team



The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University works to inspire research and innovation that ensures clean water for future generations. The staff and students at the center guide their work around four pillars of action: research, education, stewardship, and leadership. These guidelines help address some of the most pressing issues, such as water conservation and delivering tangible results.

Since its inception almost three decades ago, the Texas Stream Team works to fight pollution in the 191,000 miles of rivers and streams across the state, training volunteers to collect surface water quality data and assess it for issues. These dedicated citizen scientists, consisting of students, educators, community members, professionals, and private sector partners, serve as an early warning system for water pollution. The program not only records critically important data that is used to keep the waterways healthy, but each citizen serves as a vocal ambassador for their water body.

The statewide network of volunteers works to identify areas of concern, reduce pollution, and provide agencies with the information they need to improve and conserve our waterways. Last year, the volunteers spent almost 6,000 hours sampling water, traveling 61,305 miles to over 240 different monitoring sites across Texas. This commitment not only highlights how well the program operates, but it shows how dedicated these citizens are to protecting our state's most precious resource.

The objective of the Stream Team is to raise awareness and develop their volunteers into environmental stewards. In addition, the data collected is incredibly valuable. It is recorded online so that regional leaders and advocates can get a sense of their local water quality and, when necessary, allows them to develop remediation strategies and conservation efforts.