

West Fork Trinity River



EAGLE MOUNTAIN WATERSHED

Permitted in 1928 for municipal, industrial, and irrigation use and constructed in 1932, Eagle Mountain Lake serves as a cornerstone to the north central Texas community as a source of recreation and water supply. Construction of the Eagle Mountain Lake dam impounded flows from a 1,970 square mile watershed that extends across portions of Archer, Clay, Montague, Young, Jack, Wise, Parker and Tarrant Counties. Approximately 1,110 square miles of this watershed are impounded by the Lake Bridgeport dam in western Wise County, which controls inflows to Eagle Mountain Lake from the western 56% of the watershed. Included in Eagle Mountain Lake's 860 square mile subwatershed are waterbodies such as Lake Amon G. Carter, Big Sandy Creek, and the West Fork Trinity River.

IMPORTANCE OF THE WATERSHED

The quality of a waterbody is controlled largely by what happens in its watershed, or drainage area. Maintaining high quality creeks, rivers and lakes means maintaining clean and healthy watersheds. Even activities that happen far upstream can affect the amount and quality of water in a creek or lake, as well as the plants, animals, and people who depend on it.

The Eagle Mountain watershed is predominantly rural, with agricultural land uses of rangeland, pasture, and cropland comprising over 70% of the land area. Creeks and lakes in the watershed are challenged by the combined effects of years of agricultural practices and more recent urban land use changes in developed areas such as Azle, Springtown, Decatur, and Bridgeport. These land use modifications increase the amount of hard surfaces, runoff water, and erosion.

Population growth in urban areas has also increased the amount of wastewater processed by treatment plants and the amount of wastewater discharged to creeks and lakes in the watershed. According to the Texas Water Development Board, populations in the counties that contribute to the Eagle Mountain Watershed are anticipated to grow significantly over the next 50 years, increasing stress on the watershed.



Little Dosier Creek Watershed, 2013

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THE WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has identified several water quality issues in local creeks and lakes in Parker and Wise Counties, and within Eagle Mountain Lake. These include elevated levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, bacteria, chlorophyll, and low oxygen. While the report does not identify specific causes, it may indicate stresses that threaten the quality of waterbodies within the Eagle Mountain watershed and also the lake.

The water quality issues identified by TCEQ reflect the size and complexity of the Eagle Mountain watershed and require a collaborative approach to resolve. Tarrant Regional Water District is leading the effort to address water quality issues in the Eagle Mountain watershed by facilitating the revision and implementation of a Watershed Protection Plan.

Watershed planning is a voluntary process that aims to restore and protect water resources by:

- Identifying and mitigating controllable sources of pollutants and stresses in a watershed
- Creating a water quality goal
- Targeting subwatersheds of the highest need
- Prioritizing best management practices
- Implementing monitoring
- Planning education and outreach strategies

During this process in the Eagle Mountain watershed, a diverse set of stakeholders, such as landowners, residents, elected officials, and agency representatives have worked together to develop a comprehensive plan aimed at reducing the pollutant amounts in waterbodies. Participation in the planning process and resulting watershed plan are strictly voluntary.

WATERSHED PLANNING STEPS

1. Build partnerships
2. Characterize the watershed
3. Develop goals and identify measures
4. Design an implementation plan
5. Implement the plan
6. Measure progress and make adjustments

Public participation and stakeholder involvement is being carried out through a series of public meetings. Input from stakeholders is critical to the development of a sustainable plan, as well as for continued implementation and re-evaluation in future years. Please consider joining the effort to protect these valuable resources.

