

## BENTHIC MONITORING

What is Benthic? According to Webster's College Dictionary "Benthos" pertains to all the plants and animals living on or closely to the bottom of a body of water.

So what does this project do and how does it affect all of us? Volunteers monitor aquatic benthos to assess water quality in the city of Denton. This is important because we live in a watershed. We need to be vigilant about monitoring the status of water that could ultimately find its way into the local lakes that are a source of our drinking water.

John, Adelaide and other volunteers collect water samples from the same four sites once a month, weather permitting. The sites include Hickory Creek on Jackson Street, Upper Pecan Creek at Gay and University Street, Lower Pecan on Woodrow Lane and Cooper Creek on Burning Tree Lane. At each site they collect from a pool, a ripple, and a bank side, and then spend 30 minutes picking out insects (Benthos) and putting them in alcohol-filled containers for later ID.

Volunteers meet one week later for 3 to 4 hours at room 244 in the Environmental Sciences Building, located on the corner of Ave C and Hickory on the UNT campus. Volunteers use microscopes, manuals, and books to identify the benthos. A count is taken and recorded by family for each collection site sample and an aquatic life use number is calculated for each site. If the lab work requires more than one day an additional ID workday is scheduled for the following week.

First time volunteers receive the first hour in the field or lab as Advanced Training. Additional time in the field or lab counts as Service Hours. Participants do not need waders or knee high boots to wade into the streams since John and Adelaide have them. However, if you wish to bring waders you may have an opportunity to collect benthos.

John, Adelaide and Renee are also trained volunteers of the Texas Stream Team at Texas State University-San Marcos. In addition to collecting samples for benthos, water samples are collected and tested for pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity and E.Coli. David Hunter, Denton City Waste Water Department, is the local partner for the Texas Stream Team. Two-day volunteer training classes are held each year, which count for Advanced Training.

So if this sounds like your cup of tea or maybe a little murky water, join them on their next monthly collection and ID project coming up. Contact them at [acbodar@verizon.net](mailto:acbodar@verizon.net) or call them at 940-206-5410.