

2005 Conservation Awards

On September 30, 2005, the District held a luncheon hosted by the Bowie High School Culinary Arts program to honor the recipients of the 2005 Conservation Awards. Since 1992, the District has presented these awards to individuals, organizations, companies and/or agencies that have invested considerable effort towards the protection and conservation of water resources in the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer. This year the District received a diverse group of nominations in the five categories: Water Conservation, Water Quality Protection, Education, Research, and Innovation.

The recipients of this year's Water Quality Protection Award were Mr. Terry Tull and Mr. Grant Jackson for their work on the Regional Water Quality Protection Plan. Rapid growth and development in northern Hays County and southwest Travis County have created concerns about the increasing potential for pollution in groundwater and surface water. The Regional Water Quality Protection Plan was established to address the water quality issues facing the area of the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer and its contributing zone and to preserve water quality in this area.



Craig Smith, Board Secretary, presents the 2005 Water Quality Award to Terry Tull and Grant Jackson.

Terry Tull, Executive Director, and Grant Jackson, Environmental Engineer with Naismith Engineering, Inc., worked with a group of diverse stakeholders and completed the many organizational and administrative tasks necessary to keep the planning process on track and bringing it to fruition. The final version of the plan was submitted to the City of Dripping Springs, which in turn formally submitted the plan to the Texas Water Development Board on June 22, 2005. For more information on the Regional Water Quality Protection Plan, please visit: www.waterqualityplan.org.

In the Water Conservation category, the award went to Texas Lehigh Cement Company LP. The Texas Lehigh Cement Company has reduced its pumping from the Edwards Aquifer almost 50% since 1998. This pumpage reduction has been achieved by improvements to industrial cooling water processes, the elimination of unnecessary washing activities, and a quick response program to water leaks. In addition, stormwater runoff is collected and used solely for road dust suppression in the plant area.

The District awarded the City of Austin, Watershed Protection Development Review's water quality educational programming the Education Conservation Award this year. These water quality education programs present instruction and educational materials to students, teachers, and the general public. These programs also provide the information needed for Austin's citizens to make informed decisions about reducing pollution in both surface and groundwater. The Department reaches over 5,000 students and teachers a year through their Earth Camp, Earth School, and Hydrofiles programs. The Grow Green program works with nursery owners, landscape professionals, and the public to educate citizens on native landscaping, least toxic pest management, and responsible fertilizer use. In addition, the department organizes stormdrain education, places bags and receptacles for pet waste throughout the city, and prints and distributes numerous brochures. For more information on the City's watershed educational programs, please visit: www.ci.austin.tx.us/watershed/education.htm.



Barbara Mahler, winner of this year's Research Award, shares a short presentation on her work.

This year's conservation award in Research went to Dr. **Barbara J. Mahler**. Dr. Mahler's research has made important contributions to the fields of hydrogeology and to the study of sediment-associated contaminant transport in the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer. Her work spans many years, beginning with her Ph.D. dissertation at UT Austin involving "Mobile Sediments in a Karst Aquifer," to her on-going research involvement as USGS team leader on the "Barton Springs Groundwater Characterization Project." In addition, Dr. Mahler has effectively communicated the research and findings to a broad non-technical audience including her Earth Science Institute lectures (www.esi.utexas.edu).

Stratus Properties was the recipient of this year's Innovation Award. Stratus Properties' Escarpment Village Green Roof Project was nominated by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center as the first commercial building project in Austin to install an extensive "green" roof.

The landscaped roof will cover an 8,000 sq. ft shopping area and will be the first in Texas (and one of the first in the US) to feature an entirely native plant palette. Green roofs reduce the heat island effect, reduce and filter stormwater runoff, improve air quality, improve energy efficiency, and provide habitat. In addition, the building will also have a rainwater collection system for irrigation and will be built with the latest green building technologies. For more information, please visit: www.wildflower.org and search for “green roofs”.



Above: Board Vice-President, Jack Goodman, presents the Innovation Award to Laurie Swan of Stratus Properties.

The District also recognized volunteers from the Capital Area Master Naturalists for their hard work on The District's new water-wise landscape and rainwater harvesting system. Mr. Al Janelle was awarded the 2005 Volunteer of the Year Award. The District would like to thank the Bowie Culinary Arts program for preparing a wonderful atmosphere at the luncheon. Again, congratulations to all this year's nominees and volunteers for their commitment to the protection and conservation of water resources in the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer.



Some of the 2005 Conservation Recipients (from left to right): Mary Helen Quinn, Capital Area Master Naturalist Volunteer; Peggy Murphy, Capital Area Master Naturalist Volunteer; Al Janelle, 2005 BSEACD Volunteer of the Year; Rick Waddell of Lehigh Cement Company and winner of this year's Water Conservation Award; Sara Heilman and Susan Wall of City of Austin Watershed Protection Development Review and winners of this year's Education Award; Terry Tull from the Regional Water Quality Protection Plan and winner of this year's Water Quality Protection Award.