



**Barton Springs
Edwards Aquifer**
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Aquifer District Announces 2011 Groundwater Stewardship Award Winners

At its Oct. 13, 2011, meeting, the Board of Directors of the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District selected the 2011 Groundwater Stewardship Award winners and approved the District Staff's selection of the Permittee of the Year. General Manager Kirk Holland noted that "this year the nominated candidates were all exceptionally strong, and it was difficult to identify a single winner within each category." The Board and staff are proud to honor these exemplary efforts to conserve and protect the groundwater resources of the area:

Permittee of the Year

Arroyo Doble Water Company

Neen Grubert, Arroyo Doble Water Company (ADWC) owner and operator, has been proactive in working in cooperation with the District on outreach efforts to inform end-users of aquifer conditions, rule changes, and conservation suggestions, exemplifying the notion that "we are all in this together". ADWC has aggressively implemented the measures of the UDCP to ensure compliance with pumpage limits during drought, and has a consistent history of timely submitted and accurate meter readings and fee payments and prompt response to all District correspondence. Arroyo Doble has proven to be a model permittee in many ways and the Staff of the BSEACD wishes to recognize and commend their efforts by awarding them with "Permittee of the Year."

Water Conservation – Residential

John Gula, Cimarron Park Homeowner

This homeowner was nominated by a representative of his water utility, Cimarron Park Water Company, Inc., for exceptionally low monthly water use and no well on the property. This homeowner has been responsibly using water for years with no formal recognition. Native landscaping creates a beautiful wilderness feel.

Water Conservation – Business/Permittee

Onion Creek Club

General Manager David Woods and Superintendent Michael Moore have found the balance between maintaining an attractive, playable golf course and environmental stewardship. They have maximized water efficiency by installing a state-of-the-art irrigation system that adapts to conditions on the (and of the) ground and have minimized total irrigated acreage by setting aside land for native bird habitat (certified with Sanctuary Status for the Audubon International Society).

Water Quality Protection

City of Austin Water Quality Protection Lands Program

The City of Austin Water Quality Protection Lands (WQPL) Program protects approximately 21.7% (over 26,500 acres) of the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone. The WQPL Program manages lands to enhance native habitat and quality of water recharging the aquifer, works with surrounding landowners to increase awareness and protection of the lands, and engages volunteers to involve the public and extend City of Austin resources.

Innovation

Pat Reynolds

About two years ago, Pat Reynolds manufactured a well sounder (aka eline) to monitor water levels in his well and those of his neighbors. He has continued to measure levels and report those data to the District helping staff hydrogeologists better understand aquifer conditions. He has provided a parts list, wiring schematic, and pictures of his well sounder to allow others to build a similar system. This innovation directly benefits well owners in the District by offering a low-cost solution to water level monitoring. District staff plan to build several to loan to neighborhood groups.

Education (dual award)

Clean Water Fund

Through its Central Texas Water Conservation Project, the Clean Water Fund has visited over 41,000 households, engaged neighborhood and community groups, and distributed over 50,000 educational pieces on the benefits and methods of water conservation. By promoting a ‘culture of water conservation,’ the Clean Water Fund has played a major role in protecting Central Texas water resources—groundwater supplies in the District, in particular. Their door-to-door canvassing project in the District substantially increased drought awareness and provided conservation practices to a set of groundwater users that otherwise might not get such information.

Matt Turner and Heather Tuček

As volunteers for the Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA) and the UT Grotto, Matt Turner and Heather Tuček have made outstanding contributions towards aquifer education through their cave immersion education. Matt Turner, current volunteer manager for TCMA’s Whirlpool Cave Preserve, guides cave trips and coordinates exploration, education, and research access to the cave. Heather Tuček also assists in dye traces and karst preserve patrols. Their efforts help build public support to protect water quality and the rare species in the Edwards Aquifer.

Research (dual award)

Hydrogeologic Atlas of the Hill Country Trinity Aquifer, Douglas Wierman, lead editor

This hydrogeologic atlas synthesizes the work of three groundwater conservation districts, numerous volunteers, agencies, and foundations. The atlas serves as an excellent reference for geoscientists, citizens, and governmental agencies to make informed decisions about the Trinity Aquifer in Central Texas. The Hydrogeologic Atlas of the Hill Country Trinity Aquifer and Doug Wierman's efforts greatly increase awareness and knowledge of groundwater resources in Central Texas.

Michael Passarello

Mike Passarello's Master's thesis extends and synthesizes decades of research on the hydrogeology of the Barton Springs segment to produce a multi-model evaluation of aquifer response to changing recharge. Mike combined field observations, spatial data, recharge interpretations by other scientists, working knowledge from the BSEACD staff, and groundwater availability models to test scientific hypotheses and integrate information so that outputs can be used to inform policy and management of the aquifer.

BSEACD is a groundwater conservation district charged by the Texas Legislature to preserve, conserve, and protect the aquifers and groundwater resources within its jurisdiction, which includes parts of three Central Texas counties. It is governed by a Board of five elected directors and staffed with hydrogeologists, groundwater regulatory compliance specialists, environmental educators, geospatial systems specialists, and administrative support personnel.

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