

Leaders in Groundwater Protection Recognized

On November 9, 2007, the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District hosted its 2007 Groundwater Stewardship Awards at a luncheon prepared and served by the Bowie High School Culinary Arts program. Each year, the District presents these awards to deserving individuals, organizations, companies or agencies that have excelled in efforts to protect and conserve water resources in the District. In addition to the District's regular annual recognitions, this year's luncheon included a new award, Permittee of the Year. This award honors the District permittee that the staff and Board feel most demonstrates a continued commitment to education, water quality protection, and water conservation.

BSEACD congratulates the following recipients who were chosen from a record number of submissions:



Venkappa Gani

Water Conservation by an Aquifer End-User: Venkappa Gani

Venkappa Gani moved to the Manchaca area in 2002 and quickly became involved with the Travis County Master Gardener Association. He installed his own native, water-wise landscape and a rainwater harvesting system. This experience gave him the confidence and enthusiasm to share rainwater harvesting with other interested residents. He was instrumental in designing and installing a demonstration rainwater harvesting system at the Zilker Park Clubhouse and gives water-wise landscaping workshops at garden club meetings and home and garden shows. He has won several awards for his efforts and has been featured on KLRU's Central Texas Gardener program.

Water Conservation by a Water Supplier or Permittee:

The City of Sunset Valley

The City of Sunset Valley provides a variety of conservation programs and incentives for its citizens, which include hose-end timers; mulch delivered upon request; individualized watering schedules; water conservation literature; and water conservation kits for retrofitting toilets, sinks, and showers. They also offer a \$550 rebate for purchasing a high efficiency washing machine and \$325 rebate for purchasing a high efficiency toilet (1.28 gallons or less). To date, over 10% of households in Sunset Valley take advantage of one of these programs, and over the next 10 years if each household takes advantage of one of the replacement programs, it is estimated that the City of Sunset Valley can reduce water consumption by more than 10%, saving over 3 million gallons of water a year. In addition, to reduce demand on the aquifer during drought, the City is installing an emergency water bypass to connect with the City of Austin.



Sunset Valley



Alex S. Broun

Research: Alex S. Broun

Al Broun's research on the Trinity Aquifer has contributed significantly to a better understanding of the geology and hydrogeology of Central Texas groundwater resources. As projected additional demands on the Trinity grow within the District boundaries, Mr. Broun's research will be a crucial component in better understanding relationships between the Edwards and Trinity aquifers and how they should be managed.

Education: Laura Merino and Daniel Dietz

Laura Merino teaches aquatic science at Bowie High School and is recognized for her exceptional efforts to educate her classes on the Edwards Aquifer. Within one year of starting at Bowie, Laura has doubled the aquatic science classes from two to four and now reaches a total of 120 students a year. She takes her students to monitor Slaughter Creek regularly and provides the data online for the community. In addition to teaching seven classes at Bowie (she also teaches chemistry), she leads the school's Earth Conservation Club and seeks out and regularly attends professional development opportunities like the Groundwater to the Gulf conference. Laura is a shining example of a teacher who goes above and beyond, utilizing local resources to educate and inspire students to protect their environment.



Daniel Dietz serves as the Manager of the Wildland Conservation Volunteer Program with the City of Austin's Wildlands Conservation Division and is recognized for his tireless efforts to engage and educate volunteers who work on the City's 15,000 acres of water quality protection lands. Volunteers participate in activities that promote water quality protection for the aquifer (like salamander and deer counts, cave digs to enhance recharge, trash pickups along creeks, native grass seed plantings, juniper removal, and trail building) and walk away with valuable knowledge and skills they can use in their own backyards and communities.



Water Quality Protection: HaysCAN, Charles O'Dell, Ph.D

Dr. Charles O'Dell, a board member of HaysCAN, works tirelessly to monitor water quality protection issues in Hays County and the Barton Springs aquifer. He serves on several stakeholder committees (including the ongoing Gilleland Creek Total Maximum Daily Load Study, the Regional Water Quality Protection Plan, and the LCRA/SAWS Feasibility Study), works with local authorities to improve monitoring of on-site septic systems, and faithfully collects water samples from Bear Creek (immediately downstream of Belterra) on a monthly basis. He is also responsible for organizing a large, diverse group of local stakeholders to oppose TCEQ's draft direct discharge permit for Hays County WCID #1 (Belterra).

Permittee of the Year: The City of Buda

The City of Buda consistently takes progressive steps to monitor and manage their water use from the aquifer. The City has been proactive to diversify their water resources and practice conjunctive use. Specifically, they have recently completed and are utilizing a supplemental water supply connection with surface water provided by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA). They were the first permittee to modify their User Drought Contingency Plan (UDCP) to reflect achieving compliance with drought limits through supplemental surface water, and adopted this UDCP as a City ordinance. In addition, they were 1 of only 4 permittees to have perfect compliance with monthly pumpage limits during critical stage drought and the water conservation period, and were diligent in policing and enforcing UDCP provisions under the adopted City ordinance during drought.

