



**Barton Springs
Edwards Aquifer**
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, October 2, 2013

For more information, contact: Robin Gary, Senior Public Information and Education Coordinator, (512) 282-8441 or rhgary@bseacd.org

Aquifer District Announces 2013 Groundwater Stewardship Award Winners

At its September 26, 2013, meeting, the Board of Directors of the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District selected its 2013 Groundwater Stewardship Award winners. The District presents these stewardship awards every two years to deserving individuals, organizations, companies or agencies that have invested exemplary effort towards the protection and conservation of water resources in the District.

General Manager John Dupnik noted that “The current drought highlights the importance of conserving, preserving, and protecting our water resources. The District’s Groundwater Stewardship Awards are an opportunity to turn our focus to the innovative, creative, inspiring, and passionate folks going above and beyond. Being nominated is itself a wonderful honor.”

The Board and staff are recognizing the following extraordinary efforts to conserve and protect the groundwater resources of the area:

Water Conservation Award

Halley Ortiz, Hays County Resident

Halley Ortiz and her husband, Thomas, practice and share their experiences from striving to live a sustainable lifestyle in Central Texas. They've set up a vigorous square-foot gardening system to help feed the family and wrote about the healthier and less expensive results. Their native landscaping and rainwater harvesting efforts allow the family to use far less water than that required by their water system in the depths of the drought.

Halley is outspoken about the need to conserve our valuable water resources as individuals and as a community.

Education Award

Jill Harding, Bowie High School

Jill Harding is a long-time science teacher at Bowie High School and is the Science Department Chair and a past Faculty Sponsor for the Science Club. This summer she helped coordinate restoration efforts at Bowie's cave and physically helped with excavation to make it a safer and more feasible educational venue. Her passion, teaching abilities, and thoughtfulness have inspired many students to seek careers in the sciences.

Research Award

Corrine Wong, Jenna Kromann, and Jay Banner, UT-Austin

Dr. Corinne Wong, graduate student Jenna Kromann, and Dr. Jay Banner conducted a significant study of the hydraulic connection between the Edwards and Middle Trinity Aquifers. Using geochemical data for these aquifers and an intervening aquitard (Upper Trinity), they confirmed earlier studies that there is minimal potential for flow between the Edwards and Middle Trinity Aquifers. This is important for determining if the Middle Trinity Aquifer can be managed separately from the Edwards Aquifer. Results were published in an article titled, "Investigating Groundwater Flow Between Edwards and Trinity Aquifers in Central Texas" in the peer-reviewed journal, *Groundwater*.

Water Quality Protection Award

Shield Ranch

The Shield Ranch is located within the Contributing Zone of the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer. They have done an excellent job of managing their 6,000 acre ranch with obvious benefits to runoff quality and quantity. They have a very low stocking rate of cattle with rotation, they have an active ecological stewardship program, they work to restore the fundamental components of a healthy ecosystem on the land, work to protect riparian communities, work to protect endangered species, and almost all of their acres are covered by a conservation easement with the City of Austin (WQPL) or the Nature Conservancy of Texas. The Shield Ranch demonstrates a commitment to managing the land as highly responsible stewards.

Innovation Award

Joe Vickers, The Wellspec Company

Joe Vickers of the Wellspec Company has demonstrated a continued commitment and dedication to protecting the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer through incorporating innovative practices and research that have greatly improved the overall understanding of the hydrogeology and well construction in the District. Mr. Vickers is always quick to offer his expertise. He has been actively engaged in District stakeholder groups and committees, and his input has been invaluable to District. As a consultant, the quality of his work is exemplary, as is his overall knowledge and communication skills.

Nominations were made by members of the public and District staff, and the nominees were evaluated and winners selected by the Board of Directors.

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.

#